

## MINUTES

### **HARRISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR/VIRTUAL MEETING August 5, 2020 ZOOM PROGRAM PLATFORM**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joseph Alsberry, Chair  
Vern McKissick, Vice Chair  
Shaun E. O'Toole  
Jamesetta Reed (arrived at 6:42 PM)  
Ausha Green  
Anne Marek  
Zac Monnier

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:** Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director  
Tiffanie Baldock, Senior Deputy City Solicitor

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 6:40 PM

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Commissioner Marek moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting without corrections; the motion was adopted by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**1 Special Exception Application for 901 North Front Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Edwin Tichenor with Turn Key Realty Group, to construct a fence enclosing the front yard.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the condition was that:

1. The Planning Bureau recommends that the Applicant install a four-foot-high fence, which is the standard for other such properties located along Front Street, to prevent creating an "institutional" appearance at a highly-visible corner property at a city gateway.

Mr. Knight noted that the Planning Bureau had received a letter from the public regarding the project and that because he was not able to provide it to the Planning Commissioners or public in advance of the meeting, the Law Bureau had recommended it be read in its entirety. The letter, written by Erica Bryce (915 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA) supported the installation of a four-foot-high fence, as opposed to the current proposal for a five-foot-high fence.

The case was represented by Edwin Tichenor (the property owner), 2440 Dewey Lane, Enola, PA 17025 (aka “the Applicant”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicant whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; he confirmed that he wanted the option of installing a five-foot-high fence, but would accept a decision for a four-foot-high fence. He stated that the design was chosen to accent the historical characteristics of the building, and that the fence would be an amenity for the residents, as it would reduce the impact of nearby panhandling and drug paraphernalia refuse. The Applicant also stated that the building residents supported the proposed fence design as it would improve their use of the courtyard. He reiterated that he would accept the Planning Commission’s decision to approve either a four-foot-high or a five-foot-high design.

A member of the public (Christine Bair, 907 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA) asked whether she could provide comment. Commissioner Alsberry acknowledged that a request had been made from the public; Ms. Baldock recommended that public comment be reserved until after the Planning Commissioners had provided input. Commissioner Alsberry confirmed that he would solicit public comments after allowing each Planning Commissioner to provide comments or ask questions.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner O’Toole said he did not have problems with the proposed fence and stated that he hoped there was a way to address the panhandling issue noted by the Applicant.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no comments.

Commissioner Green noted that she was reviewing the subject property and the nearby property at 915 North Front Street and that she would support either a four-foot or five-foot fence.

Commissioner Marek noted that she was aware of the panhandling activity on the corner and understood the request for the fence, but stated that she was more inclined to approve the four-foot-high option. She asked the Applicant whether he had considered landscape screening around the perimeter of the front yard. The Applicant stated that he had considered landscaping as part of a larger proposal to improve the property, which was important since it was located at a gateway into the city, but that he was concerned landscaping would restrict views of the river from the property and views of the property from the surrounding streets and sidewalks. He stated that he felt an individual could jump over a four-foot-high fence, but not a five-foot-high fence.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he felt a four-foot-high fence would provide the necessary security and access control without restricting views, and that he felt a five-foot-high fence would be intimidating and unfriendly to passersby. He stated that the Planning Commission should consider the perspective of pedestrians and drivers passing by the property as well, since it was a highly-visible property, and that he felt the four-foot-high fence was a good compromise.

Commissioner McKissick stated that he was concerned about establishing a precedent for other riverfront properties and that he felt the Planning Commission should be clear about the specific

conditions of the subject property that justified approval of a fence. He stated that he felt having multiple properties with fences up and down Front Street would change the nature of the corridor. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether he was supporting a four-foot-high fence versus a five-foot-high fence; Commissioner McKissick stated that their decision should clarify that approval was due to the unique circumstances of the site and would not constitute justification for the future installation of such fences. Ms. Baldock noted that front yard fences in the RF district would still need to receive Special Exception approval in the future. Commissioner McKissick concurred, but noted his concern was more the presence of the fence as opposed to its design.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project. Ms. Bair stated that she was not a supporter of front yard fences, and that she had no intention of installing one in her front yard, but that she felt a four-foot-high fence was a better solution and that a five-foot-high fence would be intimidating. She noted that the other property adjacent to hers at 915 North Front Street had a four-foot-high fence, and stated that she thought having fences of the same height would give a better appearance from the street.

Ms. Baldock asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments on the project. Ms. Bair again spoke and stated that she had resided at 907 North Front Street for 22 years and that while there were often panhandlers on the corner, they were usually polite to her and that she had never found any drug paraphernalia in her yard.

Ms. Baldock asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments; there were no additional comments.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions and to include a reference to the uniqueness of the property in granting approval. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (6-1).

## **2 Special Exception Application for 124 State Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Derek Dilks with 122-124 State St., LLC, to convert the existing office building into a three-unit, "Multifamily Dwelling."**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. The Applicant will submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application for HARB review for any proposed exterior alterations to the building.
2. The Applicant will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the account billing is updated to reflect the proposed change in use.

The case was represented by Derek Dilks (the property owner), 1701 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Chris Dawson with Chris Dawson Architect (the project architect), 153 Maple Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033 (aka "the Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that they were acceptable. They stated that they had submitted a COA

application to install two new windows in the rear façade for review at the September HARB meeting.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had anything to add to the case report. They stated that it was previously occupied by offices, but had been vacant for over four years and was originally constructed as two single-family residences. They noted that the project would continue a trend of converting underutilized, downtown office space to apartments, which would bring more residents downtown.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that there was not dedicated parking included with the property and asked whether future residents would have to secure their own parking. The Applicants confirmed that the property did not have dedicated parking, but noted that when the property had been in use, there had been twelve workers in the building. They noted that there would be a lower burden on the parking in the area and that it was often easier to find parking at night, which would be of more concern to future tenants. They stated that they did not think the lack of parking would be an issue for future tenants or would be a burden on the existing on-street parking along State Street; they noted that the proposed use would require less off-street parking than the previous use on-site.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that residents may have different parking needs than office workers, but noted that so long as the Applicants apprised potential tenants of the parking situation, they would be able to figure out what worked best for them.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick stated that he supported the project and concurred with the Applicants that because the building was originally constructed as a residence, they were returning it to its intended use, although with slightly more density.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he also appreciated the property being returned to its original use, and inquired as to the anticipated monthly rents of the units. The Applicants stated that nearby comparable rentals from other downtown developments would put the monthly rents in the range of \$1,200-1,800; they also noted that these would be relatively larger than other units downtown.

Commissioner Reed stated that she supported the project as submitted.

Commissioner Green also agreed with the conversion back to residential use, and stated that she supported the project.

Commissioner Marek stated that she supported the project for the same reasons as the other commissioners and noted that she was happy to see that they would be larger units.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he enjoyed walking down State Street, but that it was empty at night because some buildings were vacant offices, and that he supported a greater mix of uses.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project; Ms. Baldock gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. There were no comments.

Commissioner Alsberry reiterated his comments about parking, but stated that he supported the redevelopment and reuse of the buildings, and that such projects would make the corridor better than it already was.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

**3 Special Exception Application for 130 State Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Derek Dilks with 130 State St., LLC, to convert the existing office building into a five-unit, "Multifamily Dwelling."**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. If granted zoning approval to move forward with the project as proposed, the Applicant will file a Land Development Plan for the development of five units, as required by the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and receive approval from the City Council.
2. The Applicant will submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application for HARB review for any proposed exterior alterations to the building.
3. The Applicant will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the account billing is updated to reflect the proposed change in use.

The case was represented by Derek Dilks (the property owner), 1701 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Chris Dawson with Chris Dawson Architect (the project architect), 153 Maple Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033 (aka "the Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that they were acceptable.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had anything to add to the case report. They stated that it was a similar project to the one they had just presented, although it included slightly more density. They noted that the building had previously been occupied by a law firm. The Applicants noted that the original use of the building had been residential, and that it was being returned to that use, although it would be a multifamily dwelling. They also noted that the former owner had a lease for off-street parking spaces with a nearby property on North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and that there were six designated off-street spaces available to future tenants, although they noted that the arrangement was temporary since it was a lease on a separate parcel. The Applicants stated that there would be no exterior alterations made to elements visible from the adjacent rights-of-way.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick stated his support based on the conditions he had noted in the review of the previous project, and that he supported the conversion of disinvested buildings from office uses to residential use.

Commissioner O'Toole stated his support for the project.

Commissioner Green stated her support of the project.

Commissioner Marek asked how long the building had been vacant since the former law office closed. The Applicants noted that they had purchased the property prior to the former tenant leaving, and that it had been vacant since October 2019. Commissioner Marek noted that it had not been vacant for long; the Applicants noted that towards the end of the business' occupancy, there were only a few employees on staff.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he liked the idea of the courtyard in the rear of the building, and that he supported the project.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project; Ms. Baldock gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. There were no comments.

Commissioner McKissick moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

**4 Special Exception Applications for 223 State Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Derek Dilks with 223 State St., LLC, to convert the existing office building into a six-unit, “Multifamily Dwelling” and to request partial relief from the off-street parking requirements.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. If granted zoning approval to move forward with the project as proposed, the Applicant will file a Land Development Plan for the development of six units, as required by the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and receive approval from the City Council.
2. The Applicant will receive approval from HARB for the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application submitted for the proposed alterations to the rear façade of the building.
3. The Applicant will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the account billing is updated to reflect the proposed change in use.

The case was represented by Derek Dilks (the property owner), 1701 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Chris Dawson with Chris Dawson Architect (the project architect), 153 Maple Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033 (aka “the Applicants”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that they were acceptable. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had anything to add to the case report. They noted that approximately a quarter of the building was currently leased and that the occupant, the Pennsylvania Fire Institute, would be vacating the property by the end of the year. They noted that the building was larger than the previous two properties proposed for residential conversion, and that there were three off-street parking spaces associated with the property. The Applicants noted that the project would bring an historic commercial structure along State Street back into productive reuse.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick that a residential reuse would likely be required to make the reuse and redevelopment of the property financially feasible.

Commissioner O'Toole stated his support for the project.

Commissioner Marek noted that the Applicants were developing a concentration of properties in the downtown, and they stated that they would be presenting other redevelopment projects to the Planning Commission in the near future. Commissioner Marek stated that the building was one of her favorites in the city, noted that there were historic interior elements, and asked whether the Applicants would be preserving those aspects of the property. The Applicants noted that there was an existing central stairwell that would separate the units in the front of the building from those in the rear; they stated that another stairwell had been filled in with an elevator, but that they were attending to reconstruct the historic stairwell around the existing elevator tower. They noted that they had received approval from HARB at their August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting for the installation of new windows in the rear of the building to bring natural light into the rear units.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he appreciated and supported the project.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project; Ms. Baldock gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. There were no comments.

Commissioner Marek moved, and Commissioner McKissick seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

**5 Variance & Special Exception Applications for 11-15 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Bryan Davis with the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority and Denise Britton with Shalom House, to establish “Supportive Housing – Emergency” and “Supportive Housing – Facility” uses on-site and to request relief from the off-street parking requirements.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. The Applicants will receive approval from the City Council for the Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan application submitted concurrently with this zoning relief application.
2. The Applicants will coordinate with CRW regarding the installation of stormwater management infrastructure on-site and connections to existing water and stormsewer lines.
3. The Applicants will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the account billing is updated to reflect the new development.
4. The Applicants will install an awning on the southern elevation over the location of the proposed bike racks on the side of the building.

The case was represented by Denise Britton (the contract purchaser), 5598 Banbridge Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112; Esch McCombie with McNees, Wallace & Nurick (the legal counsel), 100 Pine Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Marc Kurowski with K&W Engineers (the project

engineer), 2201 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110 (aka “the Applicants”). They stated that other project staff were in attendance should questions or comments arise related to their work.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that they were generally acceptable. They noted that the proposal would relocate the same use that existed a few blocks to the south. The Applicants stated that they wanted to address the proposed conditions individually, but noted that there was an accompanying Land Development Plan application and inquired as to whether they should address all of the conditions in the zoning relief and land development case reports at the same time. Mr. Knight stated that it was ultimately up to the Planning Commissioners as to whether they wanted to review both applications at the same time, and noted that they had done that in the past with similar projects. He noted that there were different conditions of approval for the two applications given the nature of the review processes and the issues that may be applicable to each request.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he wanted the Applicants to address each review individually and separately. The Applicants stated that the first condition of approval was acceptable and noted that they had already submitted the Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan application for review. They stated that the second and third conditions were agreeable. They noted that the fourth condition related to the installation of an awning over the proposed bike racks along Ethel Alley would cost approximately \$5,000 and that the funds might better be directed towards the services being offered by Shalom House.

Commissioner Marek asked the Planning Bureau staff what motivated the inclusion of the condition for the awning. Mr. Knight noted that there was not a requirement in the Zoning Code regarding sheltered bike racks, but the Planning Bureau often asked that such elements be included to provide dignity to residents who may be traveling by bike and to ensure that locked bikes were protected from the elements. He noted that it did not appear that there was interior storage space for bicycles and thus that the exterior racks should be improved. Mr. Knight stated that he appreciated the Applicants’ financing constraints and, in light of the services they provided to residents and the general community, he would be fine with not including the condition but that he encouraged the Applicants to install some type of sheltering. The Applicants stated that they wanted to ensure the properties were clean and that the area was attractive, so they would ensure that bikes were not left to rust or otherwise be abandoned on the racks.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner Reed stated that Shalom House’s services were needed by the community and stated that she supported the project.

Commissioner Green stated that she was excited to see the project.

Commissioner Marek noted that she had questions related to some of the condition included in the case reports for the two applications, but that she would save those for discussion of the proposed Lot Consolidation & LDP review.

Commissioner Monnier noted the Applicants’ concerns regarding the cost of the recommended awning over the bike racks and noted that they may want to coordinate with Recycle Bicycle,

whose offices were located a few blocks away, to see if they had the capacity to do a project of this sort or had volunteers with the ability to construct an awning at a reduced cost.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project; Ms. Baldock gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. Mr. Bryan Davis with the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority (10 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Suite 405, Harrisburg, PA) stated that he was speaking on behalf of the current owner of the properties (HRA) and that he could answer any questions or comments the commissioners may have regarding to HRA's role in the process. He noted that HRA was working with the Applicants on the eventual transfer of the property once zoning approval had been granted. Mr. Davis stated that there was a significant demand for the proposed type of housing among the city's affordable housing and homeless services providers. He noted that this type of housing met an urgent need even prior to the issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the project would meet new guidelines related to social distancing within transitional housing.

Ms. Baldock asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments; there were no additional comments.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he felt it was great project and noted that it would specifically benefit the immediate neighborhood which had a significant number of vacant properties and blighted buildings.

Commissioner Monnier asked whether they were removing the condition related to the recommended awning installation; he noted that his earlier reference to consulting Recycle Bicycle might be a way to construct an affordable awning, but also noted that it might not be within that organization's capacity or mission. He stated that he did not want to include a condition that might impact the financial feasibility of the project. Mr. Knight stated that the Planning Bureau would not oppose a motion to remove that condition from the Planning Commission's resolution.

Commissioner Monnier moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff & Additional Conditions; the Additional Condition was that Condition #4 in the Planning Bureau's case report would be removed. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

**6 Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan Application for 11-15 North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Denise Britton with Shalom House, to consolidate the three lots into a single parcel and to construct a building containing "Supportive Housing – Emergency" and "Supportive Housing – Facility" uses on site.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval with Conditions; the conditions were that:

1. The Applicants will receive approval from the Zoning Hearing Board for the zoning relief necessary to establish the proposed uses on-site and to receive relief from the off-street parking requirements in Section 7-327.6 of the Zoning Code.
2. The Applicants will coordinate with the City Engineer's Office regarding the reconstruction of the sidewalk, curb cuts, and any other pedestrian infrastructure along North 15<sup>th</sup> Street to

establish safe, ADA-compliant routes along the project site. The Applicants will also coordinate with the City Engineer on improvements to the right-of-way along Ethel Alley; the Bureau would recommend that the Applicant consider a raised crosswalk at the intersection with North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, or a mid-block speed table, to slow vehicles since children cross Ethel Alley between the existing Child Care Center and the adjacent playground.

3. The Applicants will coordinate with CRW regarding the installation of stormwater management infrastructure on-site and any connections to the existing water and stormsewer networks.
4. The Applicants will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to ensure that the account billing is updated to reflect the new development.
5. The Applicants will install an awning on the southern elevation over the location of the proposed bike racks on the side of the building.

Mr. Knight noted that Condition #5 could be removed because the Planning Commissioners removed Condition #4 from their resolution on the accompanying Variance & Special Exception application.

The case was represented by Denise Britton (the contract purchaser), 5598 Banbridge Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112; Esch McCombie with McNees, Wallace & Nurick (the legal counsel), 100 Pine Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Marc Kurowski with K&W Engineers (the project engineer), 2201 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110 (aka “the Applicants”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that Conditions #1, 3 & 4 were acceptable and asked for relief from Condition #5, noting that the Planning Commission had not included that in their review of the associated Variance & Special Exception applications. They noted that they had some additional conditions regarding Condition #2 and asked whether the Planning Bureau’s recommendation was related to regular sidewalk and curb cut work, or to more extensive projects along Ethel Alley.

Mr. Knight noted that the minimum right-of-way improvements would involve the reconstruction of the sidewalk and curbing along North 15<sup>th</sup> Street, as well as an ADA-compliant curb cut, and noted that the Planning Bureau’s recommendation for a raised crosswalk or curb cut was due to the small campus configuration the Applicants were establishing as part of the project. He noted that children would be crossing from the street between the playground, child care center, and residential building, or playing along the alley, and stated that he wanted to ensure that they were able to safely play in the area. Mr. Knight noted that the project may induce some more driving along Ethel Alley, which he noted would connect the different elements of the campus. Mr. Knight noted that the City Engineer had not responded to the proposal, and that he may have other suggestions on safety improvements tailored to this location.

The Applicants concurred that sidewalk replacement, curb cuts, and crosswalks were reasonable improvements, but were somewhat concerned about more elaborate projects such as speed tables. They noted that vehicle circulation and pedestrian safety were discussed at the previous review of the adjacent child care facility, and that it was noted that facility staff would be on-hand to supervise children. They asked whether the City Engineer would provide comments on the type of right-of-way improvements required for approval; they reiterated that additional projects in the

adjacent rights-of-way might be difficult for the Applicants to complete and noted that the narrow width of Ethel Alley (8 feet) would ensure that any vehicles would be traveling slowly.

Mr. Knight stated that he understood the Applicants' concerns regarding the location and necessity of the proposed safety improvements. He noted that there were other infrastructure improvements associated with other projects being proposed north and south of the proposed development, and stated that he felt the Applicants should keep those in mind when considering public right-of-way work. Mr. Knight stated that the City may be able to partner with the Applicants on street improvements and that a primary issue was ensuring that the Applicants would be open to working with the City as a partner in any future work. The Applicants confirmed that they were willing to work with the City and suggested that "Children at Play" signage might be a good option.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick stated that he was in favor of the project with all the conditions listed in the case report.

Commissioner O'Toole concurred and stated that he felt all of the conditions in the case report should be included.

Commissioner Green concurred and stated that she felt all of the conditions in the case report should be included.

Commissioner Marek stated that she did not feel the conditions in the case report were unreasonable, and noted that the Applicants were creating a campus and that there would be an increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic. She stated that she supported more street safety and connectivity improvements being included in the project. She stated that she felt all of the conditions in the case report should be included.

Commissioner Marek noted that she was somewhat unsure of the scope and design of the project because renderings and elevation plans had not been included. She asked whether there were any safety improvements being proposed such as lighting. The Applicants noted that there would be wall-mounted lighting, although it would primarily be directed to entrances around the building, and stated that Shalom House was focused on the safety and security of their residents. They stated that while there was no additional street lighting being proposed, that overall lighting and visibility of the area would be improved.

The Applicants asked whether the Planning Commissioners meant to approve all of the conditions in the case report, including the bike rack awning that was removed from the conditions in the previous review of the associated zoning relief requests. Commissioner McKissick stated it was his intention to not include that condition in his approval recommendation; Commissioner Marek concurred and stated that Condition #2 should be retained for the current application.

Commissioner Marek asked for clarification on the proposing parking situation, and inquired as to how many spaces were required by the use and thus from how many spaces the Applicant was requesting relief. Mr. Knight stated that he had calculated a total of seven off-street parking spaces that were required by the proposed uses, but that the Applicants had stated they needed to provide

eight spaces, and that the discrepancy was due to the number of anticipated employees on-site. He noted that the Applicants were requesting relief from the total off-street parking required by the Zoning Code. Mr. Knight noted that the Applicants had indicated that approximately 10% of their residents had vehicles, and also noted that they owned a portion of a parking lot on the south side of Market Street and had a lease to access the remainder of the lot from that property owner. He noted that the Applicants would have access to additional spaces if that became an issue during the review.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he was not opposed to removing the condition related to the awning over the bike racks, but noted that the Applicants may not have the financial resources to incorporate some of the additional right-of-way improvements being recommended by the Planning Bureau. Mr. Knight reiterated that he understood that the Applicants likely did not have the ability to fund right-of-way design and engineering projects, but noted that the Applicants were creating a campus that relied on rights-of-way for access by residents of their facility and clients of the child care center. He stated that he expected that the Applicants would be supportive of street safety projects in the future if the City was able to direct resources to this area. He also reiterated that the Planning Bureau's focus was on ensuring the safety of children and adults in the area. The Applicants stated that they could agree to future coordination with the City.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project. Ms. Baldock asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments; there were no additional comments.

Commissioner McKissick moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff & Additional Conditions; the Additional Condition was that Condition #5 in the Planning Bureau's case report would be removed. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

**7 Zoning Map Amendment for 2200 & 2300 Market Street, zoned Institutional (INS), filed by Garry Gilliam with The Bridge Eco Village, to rezone the properties to a Commercial Neighborhood (CN) designation, to facilitate the redevelopment of the site.**

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, recommending Approval.

The case was represented by Garry Gilliam (the business CEO), 833 Meadow Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011; Corey Dupree (the business COO), 607 West North Avenue, Palmyra, PA 17078; and Benedict Dubbs with Murray Associates (the project architect), 1600 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka "the Applicants"). Ms. Baldock noted that there were a substantial number of people that had called into the meeting by phone, and asked the Applicants whether there were additional individuals associated with the project team. The confirmed that they would be the only representatives of the project.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether they wanted to add anything to the Planning Bureau's case report. Mr. Gilliam noted that he was from Harrisburg, but had attended the Milton Hershey School as a child and young adult. He noted that he had played football at the college and professional levels and that during his stints in other cities, he was exposed to different kinds of

development paradigms, particularly mixed-use projects. Mr. Gilliam noted that these types of projects were not prevalent in Central PA and that he hoped to introduce this typology to the city. He noted that the project team's focus was on sustainability, and that reuse of the existing historic building would be in keeping with that theme.

The Applicants stated that the company generally purchased larger buildings and converted them into "eco villages" that focused on creating places for the community to work, eat, live, learn, and play. They noted that this type of development happening in one place would improve sustainability and reduce the need for vehicular ownership or travel. The Applicants stated that "work" component would include unique uses like co-working spaces and makerspaces that would provide creative spaces accessible to the public. They noted that the "eat" element would involve growing food on-site in a closed-loop agricultural cycle that included reuse of compost, and would address the "food desert" conditions in Harrisburg. The Applicants stated that the "live" aspect would include a variety of housing, from affordable housing to upper class housing that would collocate units that traditionally were separated. They stated that the "learn" component involved partnerships with local non-profits, and financial and credit literacy. Finally, the Applicants stated that the "play" element would involve new recreational opportunities for the community including virtual reality, arcades, and indoor activity spaces. They also noted that other sustainable elements would include solar panels on the roof of the building and rainwater collection systems.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he felt the proposal was a great project and noted that reusing the entire property would be a challenging task. He asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the proposal. Commissioner McKissick stated that his company had surveyed the property over the years and that he thought it was unlikely that another institutional use would occupy the space. He stated that a rezoning proposal to ensure eventual occupancy of the building made sense and he supported the proposal.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he supported whatever was necessary to have the property put back into product reuse and thus supported the proposal.

Commissioner Reed also noted that the project sounded ambitious and stated that she was in favor of the proposal.

Commissioner Green stated that she felt the rezoning request made sense given the location of the building, and that she had been following the progress of the concept and development. She stated that it was a unique opportunity for the city and felt that it was important to take advantage of the development concept being proposed by the Applicants. Commissioner Green stated that she felt the property would need to be rezoned regardless of whether the current proposal was ultimately completed and thus supported the request.

Commissioner Marek stated that she agreed with Commissioner Green's reasons for supporting the proposal and noted that the property had been deteriorated since it was vacated despite several attempts to reuse the building as a school. She stated that there was a window of time in which a new institutional use could have been established, but that it had passed without a viable institutional reuse, and thus it was reasonable to support a new vision for the property. She stated that the proposal would be a huge benefit to the community and would bring much needed activity

to the area. Commissioner Marek stated that she felt the project made sense and that even if the proposed development was not implemented, the site would need to be rezoned to enable its viable reuse under other proposals. She noted that a majority, if not all, of the proposed uses on the site would be permitted under the Commercial Neighborhood zoning designation, and thus the proposed zoning district for the site made sense.

Commissioner Monnier also noted that he had been closely following the project; he noted that he was working on a project at the nearby greenhouse and was expecting to open his own tool library, and thus supported similar projects in the city. He expressed his strong support for the proposal.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project; Ms. Baldock gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. Mr. Ralph Rodriguez (2108 Brookwood Street, Harrisburg, PA) stated that he was strongly in support of the Applicants and their current proposal. He stated that he felt the project would bring a unique mixed-use development and experience to the community that was much needed. Mr. Rodriguez stated that mixed-use, cohousing model would allow individuals to collaborate with one another and would generate economic activities for the city and opportunities for residents. He noted that the agricultural portion of the project would be important because there were only a couple markets in the area for residents, and that it would bring fresh food to the community. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the economic opportunities created by the “work” element of the project was much needed in the area, and that the “play” aspect would expose the city’s youth to new recreational experiences. He stated that he strongly supported the project and would volunteer to participate in the project during its development and operation.

Mr. Karl Singleton (1812 Highway Street) stated that he was in support of the development project and its programming. He noted it would bring together minority- and women-owned businesses in an impactful project that would raise Harrisburg’s national and international profile; he noted that many of the issues addressed by the project were also global in scale. Mr. Singletary stated that the project had community buy-in because the Applicants had demonstrated a care and concern for engaging residents. He also noted that a rezoning approval would begin to address the blighting aspects of the property that were previously noted by the commissioners, as well as by surrounding residents, and that it would bring value to the community. Mr. Singleton noted that he had grown up in the area and that he was pleased to see that his children, nieces, and nephews would have access to the amenities of the proposal.

Ms. Baldock asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments; there were no additional comments.

Commissioner O’Toole moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to Approve the request. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- 1 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Knight noted that the Planning Commissioners had received digital versions of the revised Comprehensive Plan document and accompanying documentation. He stated that the Law Bureau was currently reviewing the document and that the Planning Bureau was awaiting their approval before moving ahead with the previously-discussed Comprehensive Plan webinar sessions via the Zoom platform. Mr. Knight noted that the process was behind the original timeline, but noted that there was enough buffer in the schedule to allow a hearing and City Council vote by the end of the year even if the webinar sessions were delayed.

Ms. Baldock concurred with Mr. Knight and asked the commissioners to review their personal schedules to identify dates in September on which the webinar sessions could be held. She noted that City Council was holding town hall events on Tuesday nights and that the webinar sessions should not conflict with those meetings.

Commissioner Alsberry the commissioners if they had any questions or comments. Commissioner Reed asked whether Ms. Baldock was requesting dates at the current meeting; Ms. Baldock stated that she expected that the commissioners would collaborate amongst themselves after the meeting to confirm a schedule for the webinars. She stated that Wednesday and Thursday nights were likely to be the best days for meetings.

Commissioner Reed inquired as to the proposed format of the webinar sessions. Mr. Knight stated that the webinars would each be approximately an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes, noting that each session would begin with a brief cover of the Introduction chapter, with subsequent discussion on two chapters from the document. He noted that the discussion on each of the chapters would be approximately 20 minutes, and would cover general information in the chapter as well as how the recommendations related to the public input and engagement. Mr. Knight stated that there would be approximately 15 minutes for questions or comments from the public. He stated that the consultant would review the public comments for potential inclusion in the document.

Mr. Knight stated that the current timeline would have the webinar sessions running through the upcoming September 2<sup>nd</sup> Planning Commission meeting, but noted that the commissioners could hold a Special Meeting anytime, with 24-hour notification via a legal ad in the newspaper, at which they could take action on the document.

Commissioner Reed inquired as to the commissioners' role at the webinars. Mr. Knight noted that a quorum was not necessary and that he anticipated that all of the commissioners would not be able to attend all of the meetings, but that he expected some of them to be at each session. He noted that it would help the Planning Commission better understand the comments or questions from the public and may inform their own comments regarding to the document to the consultant. Commissioner Marek concurred and reiterated that it wasn't a requirement that commissioners attend the meeting, although she did encourage the commissioners to attend as many as possible. Ms. Baldock noted that attendance would help the commissioners decide whether specific comments from the public should be addressed in their own comments to the consultants. She also noted that City Council may be interested in understanding the public engagement process and how the commissioners used that time to develop the final version of the document.

Commissioner Marek noted that the Planning Commission meeting on September 2<sup>nd</sup> may necessitate the webinar session that week being held on a different day. Ms. Baldock noted that if the meeting ran long, the commissioners may want to consider a different date. Mr. Knight noted that the filing deadline for the September agenda was the upcoming Friday, and stated that he had only received two applications thus far for that meeting.

Commissioner Marek noted possible scheduling timelines for either Wednesday or Thursday sessions, and stated that it would be preferable to keep the webinar sessions on the same day of the week.

Ms. Baldock noted that there were three individuals from the public still in attendance at the current meeting and asked whether they wanted to provide comment on the Comprehensive Plan discussion; there were no additional comments.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he felt that the commissioners should follow the City's lead on scheduling dates for the webinar sessions. Mr. Knight noted that if the Planning Commission held a webinar session after the September 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, they may have to schedule and advertise it for a different time than the other three sessions, or move that particular session to a Thursday instead.

**ADJOURNMENT: 8:48 PM**

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner McKissick seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0). The meeting adjourned at 8:48 PM.