

MINUTES

HARRISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR/VIRTUAL MEETING September 2, 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: 6:35 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from the August 2nd meeting without corrections; the motion was adopted by a unanimous (7-0) vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1 Special Exception Application for 131 State Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by WCI Partners, LP, to expand the existing "Coffee Shop/Café" use in the adjacent property and to establish a "Multifamily Dwelling" on-site.**

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

1. The Applicant will receive approval of the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application and receive approval from HARB for the proposed exterior alterations to the western elevation of the structure.
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 Peter Leonard (the business owner), 1703 Penn Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and David Butcher with WCI Partners, LP (the property owner), 1900 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102 (aka “the Applicants”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they confirmed that they were. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had anything to add to the case report; they stated that the report was thorough and that they were excited to expand the business on-site.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner Marek stated that she was excited about the project and felt that the proposed interior work would be an improvement and stated that she was happy to see the business expanding.

Commissioner Monnier noted that the project had received support from a neighborhood group, Capital Area Neighbors, and expressed his strong support for the expansion of the existing business. He noted that the project would enable the business to be more in compliance with current COVID social distancing best practices.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he also 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 Reed seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0).

2 Variance & Special Exception Applications for 1231 South 13th Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Lieu Tran-Dinh with Willow, LLC, to establish a “Convenience Store” use on-site and to request relief from the off-street parking requirements for the proposed use.

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

1. The Applicant will install plant screening along the fence enclosing the parking lot, on the South 13th Street side, to screen the parking lot from the adjacent residential buildings across the street, but will ensure that such screening does not limit visibility between vehicles entering and exiting the lot and pedestrians/bicyclists on the sidewalk/street.
2. The Applicant will maintain the property to the standards of the Property Maintenance Code, and will be operate the business in a manner that is not detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood, to ensure the proposed use is a benefit to the community.
3. The Applicant will ensure that any new signage conforms to the regulations in Chapter 7-325 of the Zoning Code and will submit a Building & Zoning Permit prior to its installation.

4. The Applicant will submit a Mercantile Permit application for the proposed use and will ensure that all accounts are brought current before such permit application is approved.

The case was represented by Lieu Tran-Dinh with Willow, LLC (the property owner), 2323 Forest Lane, Harrisburg, PA 17112 (aka “the Applicant”).

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

[At this point, there was an interruption from a member of the public calling in to the meeting regarding a different application and the manner in which public notice was posted on the property. There was back-and-forth discussion of where in the agenda the meeting currently was, and an acknowledgement from the Planning Bureau that the posting was somewhat vague in its wording regarding the log-in information for the current meeting; Mr. Knight apologized for the confusion and noted that he would correct the issues in future postings. He confirmed that the public had not missed their opportunity to comment on the case during the current meeting, and would have an additional opportunity to comment on the case at the upcoming Zoning Hearing Board meeting.]

Ms. Baldock advised Commissioner Alsberry to move forward with the current application review and stated that she would manage new individuals calling into the meeting.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicant had anything to add to the case report; she stated that she did not.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick inquired about the parking arrangements on-site, noting that there was a request for relief from the off-street parking requirements. The Applicant stated that she was working with Yingst Engineers & Associates and that they had confirmed that parking, including a vehicle turnaround, could be accommodated on-site. Mr. Knight noted that the Applicant’s proposed site plan included five off-street parking spaces, but that six spaces could be accommodated on-site, and that the proposed use required seven off-street parking spaces. He noted that circulation on-site may limit the Applicant to five spaces, in which case they would require relief from two off-street parking spaces.

Commissioner O’Toole asked for clarification on which of the properties in the existing conditions photos was the subject property and asked whether the adjacent property was currently operating as a convenience store; the Applicant responded that it was.

Commissioner Green noted that she lived nearby to the site and that there were three existing convenience stores and a barbershop on the block, and inquired as to why the Applicant was proposing another convenience store business. She noted that the property had previously had a convenience store on-site and asked the Applicant whether it had gone out of business due to competition from surrounding stores. The Applicant noted that she had owned the property since 2011 and that there had only been a business on-site for six to nine months of that period, and that it had been vacant since then despite being advertised for commercial use; she stated that she had managed and run convenience stores previously, so she was familiar with the business operations

model. She noted that her previous businesses had not been limited to traditional convenience store goods, but that she had provided money order services, office equipment, and bill pay services for the neighborhood in the past. The Applicant reiterated that she had had trouble leasing the property in the time she had owned it.

Commissioner Green reiterated her concerns with having another convenience store on the block and that she was unsure of whether such a business would be a benefit to the community.

Commissioner Marek concurred with Commissioner Green's comments regarding the proximity to existing convenience stores and whether the use was appropriate for the site.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicant whether she owned the adjacent property, noting its dilapidated appearance; the Applicant confirmed that she did not own that property.

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. She noted that someone from the public had raised their hand via the messaging platform and provided instructions on how they could unmute themselves to provide comment. The comment was in reference to another case being heard at the meeting. Ms. Baldock again gave instruction to the public in attendance on how to request to be unmuted so they could provide comment. There were no comments.

Commissioner Monnier moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (4-3).

3 Variance Application for 1719 Market Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Capital City Church of the Assemblies of God, Inc., to establish an accessory parking lot for the congregation of the church at 1710 Chestnut Street.

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

1. The Applicant will remove the barbed wire from the existing fence or, if the project proposes new fencing, the Applicant will ensure that no barbed, razor, or other security-type fencing is installed.
2. The Applicant will coordinate with the City Engineer's Office on removal of the curb cut and driveway onto Market Street and reconstruction of the sidewalk along the Market Street frontage in accordance with the City's sidewalk ordinance and ADA regulations.
3. The Applicant will coordinate with the City's Arborist on the appropriate native vegetation to use for the proposed landscaping on-site.
4. The Applicant will coordinate with CRW on the installation of new stormwater management facilities, and potentially green stormwater infrastructure, on-site.
5. The Planning Bureau would recommend that the Applicant coordinate with neighborhood stakeholders on potential community uses for the space during times when the parking lot is not being used by the congregation.

The case was represented by Steve Dzuramin, Esquire (the legal counsel), 508 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; Joel Widders with Evans Engineering (the project engineer), 2793 Old Post Road, Harrisburg, PA 17110; and Pastor Freddie Salas, 5975 Pinedale Court, Harrisburg, PA 17111 (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 they did not.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick noted that he didn’t have any issues with the project and noted that on-site stormwater management would be the most challenging aspect of the project. He stated that he supported the project.

Commissioner Reed stated that she understood the parking challenges faced by churches in the city and was glad to see they would get additional parking.

Commissioner Marek asked how many congregants typically attended church services. The Applicants noted that attendance had doubled over the last few years and that, prior to the COVID outbreak, they were averaging between 100 and 125 congregants. Commissioner Marek asked whether the church had any off-street parking currently and they confirmed there were approximately 24 off-street parking spaces on the same property as the church building. Commissioner Marek stated that the attendance figures indicated a pressing need for additional off-street parking.

Commissioner Monnier referenced the proposed site plan and asked Planning Bureau staff whether the proposed sidewalk along Market Street met City regulations. Mr. Knight noted that the Planning Bureau usually recommended that new sidewalks be as wide as possible, and preferably meet the width of the existing sidewalks; he noted that the proposed five-foot-wide sidewalk may require modifications to tie into the existing sidewalks, but that it appeared to meet all applicable regulations. Commissioner Monnier noted that the existing conditions photos showed that the sidewalk on either side of the existing driveway curb cut was about five feet, but that it widened to the full width between the curb and the property line further down the block. He recommended that the sidewalk be built as wide as the widest portion on the block.

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 noted that he was often concerned about the appropriate amount of parking being provided, particularly for churches as they were often located on street corners. He stated that he was glad to see the project being proposed.

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).

4 Special Exception Applications for 25 North Front Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Derek Dilks with 25 N. Front St, LLC, to convert the existing office building into an eight-unit, “Multifamily Dwelling.”

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

1. The Planning Bureau would recommend that the Applicant consider the combination of Units #2 & #3 on the ground floor, as both are fairly small (<600 square feet) and a two-bedroom configuration would add a unit that is in shorter supply in recent residential conversions.
2. If granted zoning approval to move forward with the project as proposed, the Applicant will file a Land Development Plan for the development of eight units, as required by the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), and receive approval from the City Council.
3. The Applicant will submit a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application and receive approval from HARB for any proposed exterior alterations to the building.
4. 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 Chris Dawson with Chris Dawson Architect (the project architect), 153 Maple Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033 (aka “the Applicant”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicant whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; he stated that all were acceptable except for Condition #1. He noted that the project proposed eight units total with a couple being over 1,000 square feet and a few others that were approximately 800 square feet. He stated that the interior configuration was planned with the intention of keeping direct access to the eight parking spaces in the rear of the property, and that due to the location of the existing doorway, the space had to be split by a public access corridor. He acknowledged that the two resulting units were a bit smaller, but that it maintained access from the rear of the building to the front of the building.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick concurred that retaining the existing access from the rear of the building was challenging, and that he also understood the Planning Bureau’s recommendation. He noted that many of the conversion projects resulted in “micro apartments” that were targeted to a current expected market, but that that market may change in the future, leaving smaller units that functioned as “Rooming House”-type or SRO units. Commissioner McKissick noted that he did understand the architectural challenges in retrofitting older buildings that was facing the Applicant. He also noted that these buildings were also not well-configured for current office uses due to internal configuration and circulation and the provision of things like internet cables, and thus the property needed to be reimaged in some sense.

Commissioner McKissick noted that the financial considerations were largely dictated by the cost of and ability to charge for retrofitted kitchens and bathrooms; he noted that larger units thus received proportionally less rent. He also stated that he believed the Applicant would do a good job in retaining the historic integrity of the building, but that the issue also needed to be considered in a larger context that considered current and future proposals for residential conversions of existing office space. Commissioner McKissick noted that there were many different types of

family configurations that might want to lease units in downtown buildings, but that the trend of smaller units with fewer bedrooms was effectively locking the buildings into a specific type of tenant. Commissioner McKissick stated that it wasn't the Applicant's responsibility to address that larger issue, but he felt it was something the commissioners should consider in their deliberation.

The Applicant noted that the property owner was considering several different conversions and that they were including more two-bedroom units across the larger portfolio of projects. He noted that if Condition #1 was adopted by the Zoning Hearing Board, it might become a situation where tenants parking in the rear of the property were forced to walk around the block to the front door; he noted that it may also become an amenity space such as a fitness area. The Applicant stated that the market would dictate whether the units were meeting a housing demand in the community.

Commissioner McKissick stated that he thought the project was well-developed and that his concerns were directed more to a conceptual consideration for the commissioners.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he would be more agreeable to recommending approval if Condition #1 was maintained in the final resolution.

Commissioner Marek stated that she was in favor of the project as an overall concept and that she was happy to see the property being returned to residential use. She noted that the Planning Bureau's case report had noted that there were several businesses registered to the property, and asked whether there were any business currently operating on-site and, if so, whether a phased transition of the interior to residential units was being proposed. The Applicant confirmed that the front of the ground floor was currently occupied by an office, and that if the tenant wanted to remain on-site, the property owner would be willing to renovate the building interior around their office space. Commissioner Marek stated that she understood all the different perspectives on the units but that she didn't have a strong opinion towards any of them one way or another.

Commissioner Monnier agreed that more two-bedroom apartments would be preferable, but that he felt if the Applicant felt that the proposed configuration was the best use of the space, he supported the plan as submitted. He noted that he understood the Planning Bureau's and commissioner's comments regarding the size of the units, but that he felt smaller units were justified as part of a national trend towards smaller living spaces, and that potential tenants of the units would be renting more for the proximity to downtown amenities and/or their jobs than for the actual square footage of the unit. Commissioner Monnier stated that he felt potential tenants would see their "living space" as being all of downtown as opposed to just their apartment. He also noted that he had lived in a similar sized unit for more than five years and that he felt the condition was not necessary to include in the resolution.

The Applicant noted that the original proposal for the rear of the second and third floors was similar to the first floor, but that it was eventually decided to combine them into single units of about 1,000 square feet each. He stated that they were trying to "listen to the building" in developing the project and to design the interior in a way that respected the layout and the history of the space.

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 Reed moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a majority vote (6-1).

5 Special Exception Applications for 321 North Front Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by Derek Dilks with 321 N. Front St, LLC, to convert the existing office building into a nine-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 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 Chris Dawson with Chris Dawson Architect (the project architect), 153 Maple Avenue, Hershey, PA 17033 (aka “the Applicant”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicant whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; he stated that they were acceptable. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicant had anything to add to the case report; he stated that, similar to the previous project at 25 North Front Street, the project intended to respect the history and layout of the building. He noted that an addition was being proposed for the rear of the building to address some of the spatial issues with the interior spaces. The Applicant noted that the design had been submitted for HARB review and would be heard at the September 14th meeting.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick stated that he was familiar with the property since he had formerly owned the building approximately 20 years ago. He concurred that the layout of the building directed how the interior space could be used, and noted that the interior had been heavily altered in the past. Commissioner McKissick provided a brief history of the property, noting that it had been a rectory in the 1880s and 1890s. He asked whether the Applicant was applying for historic tax credits, and the Applicant responded that the project would be pursuing those.

Commissioner McKissick stated that the reconfiguration of the ground floor space had been unusual and noted that restoring the porches in the rear would be a positive addition that was warranted. He noted that there would likely not be enough on-site parking and that tenants may have to secure spaces in municipal facilities. Commissioner McKissick noted that there had been an apartment on the upper floors when he had owned it, demonstrating the previous mixed-use nature of the building. He stated that subsequent owners after him hadn't understood how to

reconfigure the building and that their renovations were not sensitive to the historic integrity of the property. Commissioner McKissick also noted that there was a ghost in the property.

Commissioner Marek stated that she thought it was a great project and a good conversion of the existing space.

Commissioner Monnier noted the renovation design was very creative and complimented the Applicant on the diversity of units within the building; he stated that he was looking forward to seeing the final product.

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

6 Variance & Special Exception Applications for 1001 North 18th Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Matthew Krupp on behalf of JLM Real Estate Investments, LLC, to establish a “Retail Store” use and associated access and site improvements and to request relief from the off-street parking requirements for the proposed use.

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

The case was represented by Matthew Krupp with DeSantis Krupp, LLC (the legal counsel), 4200 Crums Mill Road, Suite 200, Harrisburg, PA 17112 (aka “the Applicant”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicant to provide justification for why the Planning Commission should not deny the proposal. The Applicant noted that the property was owned by the Harrisburg School District and had accommodated an institutional use for over 100 years; he stated that he wasn’t sure why it was originally zoned in the Residential Medium-Density district. He stated that the District had had difficulty finding suitable residential uses and thus that he considered the property to be undevelopable in conformance with the Zoning Code. The Applicant stated that new residential development would be cost-prohibitive.

The Applicant stated that he agreed with the Planning Bureau that the suburban design of many similar uses was not appropriate for an urban environment, but that the proposed project was a “boutique, metro-style” store with a smaller footprint that allowed the exterior of the property to be upgraded to better match the character of the surrounding neighborhood. He also noted that the proposed developer had been approved for similar projects in communities throughout the state. He stated that the proposal would dedicate 20% of the lot area to landscaped green space.

The Applicant stated that Planning Bureau staff had previously conveyed comments from the surrounding neighbors in opposition to the proposal, that he had met with them to discuss the project, and that he appreciated their concerns. He stated that the primary concerns were the

increased traffic in the neighborhood, but noted that Herr Street was a State route with substantial traffic volume and that ingress and egress would primarily be to that street. The Applicant also noted that the residents were concerned about an increase in trash or litter, but stated that he didn't think it was a fair representation of the project since the use would not be generating litter; he noted that the project would include plant screening and fencing so that it would keep litter from accumulating on-site. The Applicant noted that the residents had concerns about crime, but stated that the proximity to the State Police barracks across the street, inclusion of security personnel, and site lighting and security cameras would deter crime. The Applicant also noted that the project would provide funds to the School District, bring a large parcel back onto the city's tax rolls, and generate tax revenue from a new commercial business.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the Planning Commission usually wanted to know applicants' efforts to engage the surrounding neighborhood before a project was brought before them and acknowledged the Applicant's efforts to do so. He referenced a petition of opposition submitted by neighborhood residents and asked whether the Applicant had directly engaged nearby residents. The Applicant noted that he was a city resident and felt it was important to engage residents in the project, noting that he had spoken to some of them in person. He noted that he had submitted a petition of support signed by some of the residents, most of whom lived along Herr Street, but noted that many of the residents along North 18th Street had other proposals for the property, including as a community center or park.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner McKissick noted that his firm had been hired by the School District to renovate the building approximately twenty years ago, and that it was a salvageable building at the time, but that the School District had not properly maintained the building, leading to its eventual demolition, on which his firm also consulted. He stated that it was an example of demolition by neglect, and thus that the financial justification seemed to be lacking. Commissioner McKissick also noted that the Applicant was making a financial argument for a Variance, which he felt was not a justification under the Variance criteria, and that the Applicant had not provided information in a way that is more compatible with the existing zoning. Commissioner McKissick noted that there was an adequate supply of commercially-zoned properties for which the proposed development would be more appropriate.

Commissioner O'Toole concurred and stated that he felt the parcel was suitable for residential development and that the Applicant had not provided sufficient justification.

Commissioner Green concurred with Commissioners McKissick and O'Toole and stated that she was interested in hearing from the public regarding their thoughts on the proposal.

Commissioner Marek stated that Commissioner McKissick's comments reflected her own and that she did not think the proposal met any of the five Variance requirements.

Commissioner Monnier noted that there were significantly more residents from the surrounding neighborhood who opposed the project than supported it. He stated that he was involved in efforts in the city to increase resident access to fresh and healthy foods and that he would prefer to see the

property utilized as a community garden until such time as a more compatible residential or mixed-use development was financially feasible.

Commissioner Alsberry concurred that he did not think the Applicants had demonstrated a hardship and was inclined to deny the request.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project. Ms. Baldock again apologized for the confusion regarding access to the meeting, noting that the City's goal was always to keep the public involved, and that there would be additional opportunities for providing public comment during the upcoming Zoning Hearing Board meeting on September 21st. She asked the public whether anyone else was interested in providing comments.

Ms. Shalona Donnell (1000 North 18th Street, Harrisburg, PA) stated that she opposed the project. She stated that it was a nice neighborhood and that she had not invested in her property to look at a Dollar General retail store. Ms. Donnell stated that having a Dollar General retail store open from 8 AM to 10 PM would be unacceptable to her and that she didn't want to deal with the trash and truck traffic generated by the proposed use. She stated that she intended to oppose the application as long as necessary. Ms. Donnell stated that she had spoken with the Applicant at her home and had indicated her disagreement with the proposal. She also stated that neither she, nor many of her neighbors, had received the requisite notification letter from the Applicant. She stated that a community garden would be a much better improvement for the neighborhood.

Ms. Nichol Echols (1004-1006 North 18th Street, Harrisburg, PA) stated that she had lived at the property for fifteen years. She stated that after the Applicant had come to speak to her during his public outreach, she had gathered her neighbors who were all in agreement that they did not want the proposed project in their neighborhood. Ms. Echols stated that she felt the Applicant misrepresented the project when speaking with the neighbors. She reiterated that many of her neighbors had not received the required notification letters, and that she had copied the letters she received to distribute to them. She expressed strong opposition to any retail store on-site.

Ms. Ariel Arter (Boas Street, Harrisburg, PA) stated that she was against the proposal, noting that she had spoken with the Applicant and was still in opposition to the project. She stated that a community garden would be a cheaper development option and would increase the surrounding property values, would enhance the attractiveness of the neighborhood for potential residents, would improve the mental health and social connections of the community, and would increase sustainability while decreasing food costs for families.

Mr. Michael Brown (922 North 18th Street, Harrisburg, PA) noted that he had been a resident for thirty years and that he didn't feel the project was compatible with the neighborhood character. He expressed concern about children playing in the neighborhood, noting that the increased traffic on the surrounding streets would introduce a significant safety issue. Mr. Brown stated that the community was a quiet, tight-knit neighborhood that did not want incompatible development. He stated that there were approximately fifty people standing in the rain, waiting to speak out against the project. He reiterated his opposition to the project.

The Applicant stated that he spoke with his client who indicated that they would withdraw the application. The members of the public in attendance celebrated.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he did not think the commissioners needed to hear additional comments from the public in light of the withdrawal. He stated that the Planning Commission would be voting on the application and that they did plan to deny the request. Ms. Baldock noted that Mr. Krupp had emailed Mr. Knight during the meeting, indicating his client's intention to withdraw the proposal, and requested that he follow up with a more formal withdrawal request. The Applicant confirmed that he would do that.

Commissioner McKissick stated that he felt the Planning Commission should still hold a formal vote on the application, and Commissioner Alsberry concurred.

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

7 Land Development Plan for 1501 North 7th Street, zoned Industrial (IND), filed by Jim Hoffman with 1501 Harrisburg Partners, LP, to develop the existing property as an approximately 200-space surface parking lot with associated access and site improvements.

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

1. Per the City Engineer's comments, the Applicant will utilize Site Plan Alternative #2, which will allow the proposed traffic circle to be installed at the intersection of North 7th Street and Reily Street. The Applicant will coordinate with the City Engineer's Office on the transfer of property in the southwestern corner of the site that will permit the street work.
2. Per the City Engineer's comments, the Applicant should install a "right in, right out" driveway configuration at the access point along North 7th Street.
3. The Applicant will coordinate with CRW regarding the installation of any stormwater management infrastructure on-site and any connections to the existing stormsewer network. The Planning Bureau would recommend that the Applicant consider incorporating green stormwater elements such as pervious paving or on-site infiltration if possible.
4. The Applicant will install a pad for bike racks in the southwestern corner of the property, nearest to the proposed crosswalk at the traffic circle. The Planning Bureau recommends a minimum of five racks and would further recommend that these be sheltered from the elements as much as possible.
5. The Applicant will establish an additional ADA-accessible parking space on-site.
6. The Applicant will plant a vegetative screening around the northern, southern, and western boundaries of the site, and will plant an additional six trees, either on-site or within surrounding rights-of-way. The Planning Bureau recommends the Applicant coordinate with the City Arborist regarding the planting of any new trees as part of this project.

The case was represented by Elliot Shibley with Integrated Development Partners (the project designer), 430 North Front Street, Wormleysburg, PA 17043; and John Huenke with 1501

Harrisburg Partners, LLC (the property owner), 700 Ayers Avenue, Lemoyne, PA 17043 (aka “the Applicants”).

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they requested clarification on two of the conditions. They asked whether there was a specific type of rack required; Mr. Knight confirmed that the regulations in the Zoning Code did not require a specific type of rack, but recommended that the Applicant install a design that accommodated the greatest number of bikes. The Applicants referenced the condition regarding the installation of additional trees on-site relative to the impervious surface area of the parking lot; they noted that they had provided measurements of the paved area and that, based on those measurements, the appropriate number of trees had been provided on-site. They also noted that they did not have any issue providing the requisite landscape screening. Mr. Knight stated that his calculation may have been in error and that if proposed number of trees met the regulations in the Zoning Code, the Planning Bureau was amendable to removing that condition. The Applicants confirmed that they were agreeable to the other conditions.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether they wanted to add anything to the Planning Bureau’s case report; the Applicants responded that they did not.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the proposal. Commissioner McKissick stated that he understood the reason for the development but was disappointed that a better project was not being put forward for the property. He stated that he felt the proposal demonstrated shortcomings of the 40-year lease of the City’s parking facilities; he noted that several members of the Planning Commission were on the Harrisburg Parking Authority board and stated he wished the project was more of a benefit to the community. Commissioner McKissick stated that the location was too far away to benefit the larger Midtown neighborhood where additional parking was needed, but noted that it was not due to the Applicants but rather to the overall planning process in addressing parking issues. Commissioner McKissick noted that there had been conversations with the federal General Services Administration regarding the provision of parking, but that the organization had not been helpful in providing parking projections that would provide the financial foundation for a City-built structure nearby. He noted that if there was to a surface parking lot, then a location along the tracks made sense, although the long-term vision of the draft Comprehensive Plan envisioned higher and better uses along the corridor. Commissioner McKissick noted that a surface parking lot could be developed in the future, although noted that surface lots in the city generally lasted about fifty to sixty years before they were developed.

Commissioner O’Toole stated that he shared Commissioner McKissick’s frustrations with the project but that he didn’t feel those were a strong enough argument to vote against the current proposal.

Commissioner Marek concurred with Commissioners McKissick and O’Toole, and stated that she wished the property was able to be developed into a more valuable project for the community. She stated that she understood why the Applicants were proposing the development, but that she thought there would be a higher and better use of the property.

Commissioner Monnier stated that he was looking at the project from a more optimistic perspective, noting that the project would accommodate the proposed traffic circle and would plant trees in what was currently a vacant gravel lot. He stated that he would like to see more traffic circles throughout the city. Commissioner Monnier recommended that the Applicants coordinate with the City Arborist on the planting of trees, since they essentially had a blank slate and the parking lot would probably be around for fifty years or so.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there was anyone from the public that was for or against the project. Wayne Martin (5120 Kylock Road, Mechanicsburg, PA), the City Engineer, stated that he wanted to inform the Planning Commission about conversations the City had had with the Applicants regarding the development and its impact on City projects. He noted that, after several years of coordination with the Applicants, they would be dedicating land to the City that would allow the construction of the traffic circle at North 7th Street and Reily Street, as well as additional trees and vegetative landscaping being planted in the surrounding area. Mr. Martin also expressed disappointment that a better project was not forthcoming, but noted that the proposal was an extension of earlier parking lot developments by PHEAA to the south. He stated that the project might only be a stopgap measure ahead of future development. Mr. Martin noted that the City's investment in the corridor totaled about \$5.5 million and would bring substantial improvements to 7th Street. He noted that the Federal Courthouse had a projected opening date of June 8, 2022 and that the GSA had indicated that an additional 415-825 parking spaces, so that there were potential revenue streams for additional parking facilities in the Midtown area.

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 inquired as to the status of the 7th Street traffic circle project, and whether funding had been dedicated and a project timeline firmly established. Mr. Martin noted that the project was completely funded through a combination of City funding, a PennDOT Multimodal transportation grant, and an Impact Harrisburg grant for matching funds. He noted that the only outstanding issues were securing the necessary legal easements and a PennDOT Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP). Mr. Martin stated that he anticipated that the project to go to bid in 2020.

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

OTHER BUSINESS:

1 Comprehensive Plan Update

Mr. Knight noted that he had emailed the Planning Commissioners a calendar with a prospective schedule for the next four months, with the intention of having City Council take a vote by the end of the calendar year. He stated that he had worked backwards from the last likely City Council legislative session so that he could identify opportunities for expanded citizen engagement or document editing within the timeline.

Mr. Knight noted that the schedule required the process to have two Comprehensive Plan webinars covering four chapters each, instead of four webinars covering two chapters each. He stated that the best dates for the webinars would likely be September 9th, 10th, or 16th since the Planning Commission would have to host a subsequent Special Meeting to vote on the draft Comprehensive Plan prior to September 22nd when the next available City Council legislative session would be held. Mr. Knight noted that a presentation to City Council on September 22nd would result in an end-date of November 6th which would provide two weeks to compile and organize the public comments prior to being provided to City Council for review and discussion at a public hearing on November 24th or December 1st which would allow for a final vote on December 8th. Mr. Knight asked the commissioners on which dates they'd like to meet; he noted that he would then develop legal ads and notifications for the webinars for posting to the City's website, alongside the draft document. He also noted that the Planning Bureau would create an email address through which the public could submit comments on the draft document.

Mr. Knight stated that once the public comments were organized and presented to City Council after the 45-day public review period, the Council would have the opportunity to determine which comments they wanted to include in a final document and how they would be incorporated.

Commissioner Alsberry referred comments on the proposed timeline to Commissioners Marek and McKissick. Commissioner Reed inquired about whether and how the format would change if there were fewer webinars. Mr. Knight noted that the meeting would be extended from approximately an hour and fifteen minutes to two hours, which would provide approximately twenty minutes to provide an overview of each chapter and how it related to the input received during the public engagement portion of the process. He noted that they planned on accepting all comments and then including them with the comments submitted during the 45-day review period.

Commissioner Reed asked whether it was reasonable to conduct the webinars next week and whether that was enough time to notify the public. Mr. Knight stated that he thought it was possible, but that if the commissioners wanted to hold the webinars the following week, on September 14th and 16th, then the Planning Bureau would accommodate that request as well. He noted that the public would not only have access to the document during the webinar discussions and that it would be available during the entire 45-day review period as well.

Ms. Baldock noted the copyediting consultant had been tasked with developing a presentation for the webinars using material from the document. She noted that the commissioners were welcome to review the presentations and make comments during the webinars as well. She reiterated that time was a factor and that the webinars would likely need to occur in the next couple weeks to keep the draft document on schedule for a City Council vote by the end of the year.

Commissioner Marek noted that while the public would have 45 days to review the document, that the upcoming webinars were the only opportunities for the public to receive updates directly from the Planning Bureau and Planning Commission. Ms. Baldock noted that City Council would hold a public hearing after the comment period, so that there would be another opportunity for in-person discussion regarding the document. She stated that she wasn't sure how City Council would handle the public hearing, whether there would be multiple ones, and how they might address solicitation of public comments, but that it would likely depend on the amount of feedback received during

the 45-day review period. Mr. Knight stated that if the commissioners wanted to receive updates on the comments during 45-day review period, he would be happy to provide synopses of the comments that were submitted.

Ms. Baldock stated that it was important to move the process forward, noting that the commissioners could go through multiple rounds of edits if they so chose, but that the process did need to move forward into the public review period to get it before City Council in a timely manner. Commissioner Marek agreed, stating that she hoped it would advertised well enough in advance to allow attendance by as much of the public as possible, referencing the confusion regarding the public posting for the case that night. Commissioner McKissick concurred that webinars during the following week might not provide enough notice to the public, and Ms. Baldock stated that if the webinars were held the week after, that it would provide the City's IT and Communications Departments enough time to set up the webinar and advertise them through the City's various media channels. Mr. Knight noted that the confusion surrounding the night's case was an outlier, and that there hadn't been access issues for any of the previous month's Zoom meetings, but that it would be taken into advisement when developing public notice in the future.

Mr. Knight asked whether the commissioners had preferences on the dates for the webinars, noting that they seemed to support webinars on September 14th and 16th with a Special HPC meeting on September 17th at which a vote would be made to advance the draft document to City Council. The commissioners discussed amongst themselves and decided those dates worked best. Mr. Knight noted that the schedule could be moved back a week, although it would shorten the time he would have to compile and organize the public comments in advance of City Council's review. He noted that November would be a difficult month to handle that task as there was a short time period between the Planning Commission and Zoning Hearing Board meetings in which to develop minutes and packets for the Zoning Hearing Board. Commissioner Marek asked whether the public comments would be going to the consultant. Mr. Knight noted that it would depend on the amount of money remaining in the project budget; he noted that he would have to review the budget to ensure that the backend work of incorporating the public comments could be completed first.

Commissioner McKissick asked whether there were any legal obstructions to permitting the process to move forward. Ms. Baldock confirmed that there was no court order preventing the process from moving forward; she noted that if an order was issued, then the process may have to be stopped.

Mr. Knight confirmed that when the IT and Communications Department set up the Comprehensive Plan webpage on the City's website and the pending webinars, he would provide that information to the Planning Commissioners so that they could share it with the community. Commissioner Alsberry inquired as to the times that the webinars would be held; Mr. Knight confirmed the intention to hold them at 6:30 PM.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:01 PM

Commissioner McKissick moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (7-0). The meeting adjourned at 9:01 PM.