

MINUTES

**HARRISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
February 1, 2023
THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Alsberry, Chair
Shaun E. O'Toole
Jamesetta Reed
Ausha Green
Anne Marek

MEMBERS ABSENT: Vern McKissick, Vice Chair

STAFF PRESENT: Geoffrey Knight, Planning Director
Neil Grover, City Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER: 6:36 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from the January 4, 2023 meeting without corrections. The motion was adopted by a unanimous (5-0) vote.

OLD BUSINESS:

- 1. Variance & Special Exception Application for Capitol Heights (Phase Two), located on 41 parcels across nine sites in the blocks generally bounded by Hamilton Street to north, North 5th Street to the east, Harris Street to the south, and Logan Street to the west, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Chris Bryce & David Long with Midtown Redevelopment, LLC, to request various zoning relief from use and development regulations required for the construction of four townhomes, 76 "Multifamily Dwelling" units, 9,557 square feet of commercial space, and 95 off-street parking spaces.**

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the Applicants had submitted a request to have the review continued until the March 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Reed moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to Table the request until the March 2023 meeting. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

- 2. Special Exception Application for MarketPlace Midtown, located on 51 parcels across eleven sites in the blocks generally bounded by Reily Street to the north, Fulton Street to the east, Sayford Street to the south, and James Street to the west, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Chris Bryce & David Long with Midtown Redevelopment, LLC, to request various zoning relief from use and development**

regulations required for the construction of eighteen 18 townhomes, 44 multifamily dwelling units, a food hall, 2,875 square feet of commercial space, and 84 off-street parking spaces.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the Applicants had submitted a request to have the review continued until the March 2023 Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to Table the request until the March 2023 meeting. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

NEW BUSINESS:

3. Variance & Special Exception Applications for 2048 Market Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by James Baum with Dreamland Investors, LLC, to convert the existing single-family dwelling into a two-unit, "Multifamily Dwelling."

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

1. The Applicant shall allow the Codes Bureau to perform a comprehensive inspection and receive approval for all necessary City permits prior to receiving a Certificate of Occupancy and leasing any units.
2. The Applicant will coordinate with the Department of Public Works to confirm the appropriate size and location of refuse collection on-site, and update the billing accounts to reflect the new use.

The case was represented by James Baum with Dreamland Investors, LLC (the property owner), 335 Church Road, Shermans Dale, PA 17090; and Larry Fry (the project contractor) [address not provided] (aka, the "Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they confirmed that they were. He asked the Applicants whether they had anything to add to the Planning Bureau's case report, and they stated that they did not.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he had no questions regarding the project, and asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole noted that the commissioners usually did not support proposals for the conversion of single-family homes to multiple units, but given the history of the property as outlined in the Planning Bureau's case report, that the Applicants were able to provide the requisite off-street parking, and the need for investment into the property, he was in favor of the proposal.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Green stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Marek stated that she was generally in agreement with the proposal and felt it was a relatively minor request, and asked the Applicants to confirm that the property had previously

been converted to multiple units; she specifically inquired as to whether multiple electric units had been installed on-site. The Applicants confirmed that the property did not currently have multiple meters, and stated that they intended to do so as part of the project, and confirmed that a previous owner had converted the property to multiple units in the past; they noted that the use had been vacated for so long that the use had been abandoned and the property reverted to a single-family dwelling.

Commissioner Marek noted that the Zoning Hearing Board may request proof from the Applicants that the property had previously been converted to multiple units. The Applicants confirmed that a previous owner had block off the interior stairwell and that it was no longer possible to access the upper floors without using the exterior stairway.

Commissioner Marek asked when the Applicants had purchased the property; they confirmed that they purchased the property in December 2022. Commissioner Marek noted that the work had thus been completed before their ownership.

Commissioner Alsberry asked if there was anybody for or against the project. There were no comments.

Commissioner Marek moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

4. Special Exception Application for 2709 & 2717 North Front Street, zoned Riverfront (RF), filed by EI 2709 North Front Street, LLC, to demolish the existing structures on-site and develop a 24-unit, "Multifamily Dwelling" apartment building.

Mr. Knight gave a synopsis of the report, noting that the proposal had been revised from 24 units to 21 units, and 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 Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan application for the proposal, and receive approval from the City Council.
2. The Applicant will coordinate with the Floodplain Administrator on the necessary documentation to be filed prior to, and after, construction of the building and all other obstructions on-site, including the trash enclosure and the free-standing sign.
3. The Planning Bureau would strongly advise the Applicant to coordinate with the property owner to the north to remove or trim back the hedges preventing visibility to the north along Front Street. This is critical to ensuring the safe ingress from and egress to Front Street, on which traffic can be moving at a high volume and rate of speed. Alternatively, the Planning Bureau would recommend one-way flow onto the property from Front Street, with egress occurring via River Street.

The case was represented by Ambrose Heinz with Stevens & Lee (the legal counsel) 17 North 2nd Street, 16th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101; Adam Kerr with E.I. Associates (the project architect), 2001 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102; and Christine Hunter and Edward Black with H. Edward Black & Associates, Ltd. (the project site designer), 2403 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110 (aka, the "Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they confirmed that they had no issues with Conditions #1 & #2, but noted that the project would require a Highway Occupancy Permit (HOP) from PennDOT that might supersede Condition #3 and thus they preferred not to have a condition that might complicate the permitting process. Mr. Knight confirmed that Front Street was a State route and that the nature of the project would require PennDOT review; he stated that so long as the access proposals were acceptable to the State, they would be acceptable to the Planning Bureau as well. He stated that the HOP determination would likely not be contrary to Condition #3 and clarified that the Bureau's concern was the safe ingress from and egress to Front Street for all users. Mr. Knight noted that the landscaping to the north, which he confirmed was on the adjacent property, presented visibility issues for traffic to the north, although he noted that the issue would likely be addressed in the HOP review process.

Mr. Grover asked the Applicants to confirm that they would require an HOP as part of the project; the Applicants confirmed that was accurate; they confirmed that it would. Mr. Grover noted that Condition #3 could be altered to state that the Applicant would comply with PennDOT requirements in the HOP review process. The Applicants stated that the revised condition would be acceptable.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether they had anything to add to the Planning Bureau's case report. They stated that they wanted to briefly describe the project since it was the commissioners' first time seeing the project, and noted that they would be submitting a Land Development Plan in the future.

The Applicants gave a brief description of the existing conditions of the project site, noting that the parking area in the rear was currently non-conforming; they stated that they would be reducing the existing non-conforming aspects by installing a landscape strip around the parking area in the rear with a single point of ingress/egress onto River Alley, and reiterated that they would be removing one of the driveway curb cuts onto Front Street. They stated that the building would be constructed to current floodplain standards with living units constructed over a first-floor parking area. The Applicants confirmed that the common areas and amenities on the first floor would be constructed above the Regulatory Flood Elevation. They reiterated that the site aesthetics would be improved by the landscape screening along River Alley and in front of the proposed building.

The Applicants presented an oversized plan set for public review and further discussed the interior of the building, confirming that the proposal had been revised from 24 units to 21 units with six two-bedroom units and fifteen one-bedroom units, across three floors and also noted that the building would have a rooftop deck. They noted that the first floor would include common areas include a storage room, dog wash station, and trash area, which would be constructed below the Regulatory Flood Elevation, and a lobby, fitness room, and bike storage area that would be elevated above that. The Applicants noted the general layout of each unit with each floor and further outlined the rooftop deck and elevator/stair towers. They noted that the building façade would primarily be large glass panes, particularly facing the river, and an undetermined cladding for the remainder of the building.

Commissioner Alsberry inquired about the reason for the reduction in units. The Applicants stated that the developer felt the unit sizes were too narrow given the constraints on the width of the building, and that they wanted ensure larger units for future residents.

Commissioner Alsberry inquired as to the type of lighting the project would have; the Applicants stated that there would be site lighting around the property including in the parking lot in the rear of the site; they noted that a lighting plan would be part of the eventual Land Development Plan submission. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether there would be specific types of lighting to prevent light spillover onto adjacent properties. The Applicants confirmed that they would be LED lights with shields to prevent spillover and reiterated that a photometric plan would be provided with the Land Development Plan application. They noted that they hadn't requested Variances for relief from any aspects of the Environmental Performance Standards.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole asked whether vehicular egress would occur only onto River Alley; the Applicants noted that there was currently no restriction on access between the rear parking lots and River Alley, and that the project would result in single, controlled access points onto both River Alley and Front Street. Commissioner O'Toole asked whether River Alley accommodated two-way traffic; the Applicants noted that the alley was fairly narrow and that's why they wanted to have a two-way access point onto Front Street.

Commissioner O'Toole asked whether the design shown in the elevation plans was the final draft and stated that he found the building's appearance to be somewhat unattractive. The Applicants noted that most of the western elevation of the building would be glass, to provide expansive views of the river, and that while they had not determined the final façade material would be, although it would likely be a modern material such as metal panels.

Commissioner Reed asked whether the project would retain the 44 parking spaces even with fewer units; the Applicants confirmed they would retain all the spaces.

Commissioner Green concurred with Commissioner O'Toole that she felt the building could be more attractive, and inquired as to the proposed rents for the units. The Applicants stated that they would be higher-end units but confirmed that they didn't have a final price for each, although they were in the process of developing that information. Commissioner Green asked whether the Applicants had considered applying through the City's Affordable Housing program. They confirmed that they had given the idea some consideration, but reiterated that their focus would be on higher-end, market-rate units.

Commissioner Marek stated that she was happy to see a new residential development proposal for Front Street, noting that there had not been many such projects since the proposed "Mary K" development [note: this was proposed for the 2900 block of North Front Street circa 2005]. She noted that she was in favor of seeing some of the less attractive and vacant commercial structures be replaced with residential units. Commissioner Marek advised the Applicants to consider

including a scale representation of the project within the context of the residential properties to the east. She noted that the Applicants should consider engaging the surrounding neighborhood on the design of the project. Commissioner Marek noted that her remaining questions would likely be addressed in the PennDOT HOP review process.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the Planning Commission always appreciated Applicants being proactive about engaging the surrounding neighborhood; he asked them whether they had held any meetings with the surrounding community. The Applicants stated that they had not, but were open to meeting with them. Commissioner Alsberry recommended that they meet with them before future review meetings.

Commissioner Alsberry asked if there was anybody from the public for or against the project.

Cathie MacArthur (2730 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA) noted that she lived directly behind the project site and stated that she was in favor of demolishing the buildings and improving the neighborhood, but noted that River Alley was highly trafficked by people of various modes and wanted to ensure that the increased traffic did not endanger residents. She stated that there was a significant amount of two-way traffic along this stretch of River Alley, noting that people often used it as an alternative to Front Street or 2nd Street. Ms. MacArthur stated that the intersection of River Alley and Shamokin Street could be dangerous. She noted that the neighborhood had a lot of long-time residents, and that the change from commercial use to residential use would also change the site access patterns. She also inquired about the parking lot lighting in the rear of the project site, stating that she didn't want light spillover into her back yard, and asked them to ensure that lighting was only focused on the project site. Ms. MacArthur agreed that the building could be more attractive, but noted that the appearance might just be due to the nature of the sketch plans.

Peggy Novaleski (2708 North 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA) reiterated the concerns expressed by the previous neighbor, noting that the commercial businesses on the 2700 block of Front Street generated a substantial amount of traffic on River Alley. She stated that she also wanted to prevent light spillover onto her property, but noted that she appreciated the Applicants' proposal to install landscape screening along River Alley. Ms. Novaleski stated that the plans were impressive and an improvement over the current state of the properties. She also expressed concerns about the location and appearance of the dumpster. The Applicants stated that the dumpster would be screened by an enclosure and would be accessed via River Alley.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the comments expressed by the public were why the Planning Commission always recommended applicants be proactive about coordinating with neighborhood groups. He noted that Commissioner McKissick, who was absent from the meeting, was an architect and could provide some guidance on the installation of lighting on site. The Applicants stated that the current proposal was the first stage in the project, and that a Land Development Plan application would be filed which would include a photometric plan that would demonstrate full compliance with the Environmental Performance Standards regulations of the Zoning Code and would address the neighbor's concerns about light spillover.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he felt the concerns expressed by the neighbors were reasonable and that the Applicants should attempt to address them. He asked whether it was necessary that the project provide access to River Alley; the Applicants stated that it was to ensure appropriate circulation to and from the street. Commissioner O'Toole asked whether it was possible to have access onto River Alley be limited to one-way traffic flow; the Applicants stated that they weren't sure they could restrict access to one direction as drivers may simply decide to turn left or right from the parking area.

Commissioner Alsberry asked Planning Bureau staff for their thoughts on the issues raised by the public. Mr. Knight noted that River Alley was currently accessible from the entirety of both property frontages and thus access was currently entirely unregulated, which created much more dangerous conditions than the proposed singular access point with screening and curbing; he stated that the project would make vehicular access more predicable and thus safer. Mr. Knight reiterated that the project would simply and clarify vehicular access, also noting the proposal to remove a curb cut onto Front Street. He noted that PennDOT would likely have additional comments as part of their HOP permit review, but that in his opinion the project would improve overall access and safer for all road users. He did note that the proposed landscape screening along River Alley should be designed so that it was high enough to prevent light spillover while not being so high as to obscure children in the alley.

Commissioner O'Toole asked if Planning Bureau staff had comments on the lighting issue noted by the public; Mr. Knight noted that lighting was regulated by the Environmental Performance Standards and noted that the Applicants intended on submitting a photometric plan with the Land Development Plan application, and that most lighting products had options for shielding to direct light into a defined area on-site. He stated that if the project was not in conformance, it would need to be redesigned or would require additional zoning relief.

Commissioner Marek asked whether River Alley was designed or used for one-way or two-way circulation. Mr. Knight stated that it was likely used for two-way traffic although it might not be designed for such use; the Applicants stated that there were stop signs on both ends. Mr. Knight noted that the midtown and uptown stretches of River Alley were different from the downtown portions which featured alternating one-way directions. He noted that as a narrower alley which required vehicles passing each other to stop and/or slow to get around each other, it was likely that vehicles were driven more carefully on this stretch of River Alley. Commissioner Marek noted that she lived near a similar one-way street, and vehicles often had to drive carefully to navigate turns and oncoming traffic.

Commissioner Marek asked whether the Sanitation Department used the alley to collect trash from existing residents and businesses; the Applicants confirmed that was the case. She noted that it was reasonable to locate the dumpster enclosure on the alley.

Commissioner O'Toole asked whether they could add a condition that the Applicants met with the community members before the next meeting; Mr. Knight stated that it would be up to the commissioners, but that he felt it was reasonable to request a meeting before the review of the Land Development Plan.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff & Additional Conditions; the additional condition were that Condition #3 would be revised to requirement compliance with PennDOT's HOP permitting process, and that the Applicants would meet with the neighbors prior to Planning Commission review of the Land Development Plan. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

5. Variance & Special Exception Applications for JMB Gardens Street, located on twenty-eight (28) parcels on four proposed sites along the 2200 & 2300 blocks of North 6th Street, zoned Commercial Neighborhood (CN) and Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by the Harrisburg Housing Authority, the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority, and Vice Capital LLC, to develop vacant lots as 41 dwelling units, a community center, and associated site and access improvements.

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

1. The Applicant will receive approval from City Council for a required Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan application.
2. The Planning Bureau recommends that the Applicant consider the minor design change of the having structures on Lots #1, #3 & #4 built on the property lines along North 6th Street, and the structure on Lot #2 built on the property line along Emerald Street, to reflect the setback of the other buildings in the corridor.
3. The project will remove the proposed curb cut onto North 6th Street for Lot #3; the buildings on-site will be reoriented to front North 6th Street with parking installed in the rear of the lot accessible from Turner Alley. This proposed curb cut is inconsistent with the existing streetscape along North 6th Street and the City's Vision Zero policy which discourages the establishment of additional pedestrian/vehicular conflict points.
4. The Applicant will retain the full-width sidewalks along the North 6th Street frontages of Lots #3 & #4.
5. If the grocer's alleys running through Lot #3 are deemed to be public rights-of-way, the Applicant will submit a Street Vacation application for their abandonment and receive approval from the City Council.

The case was represented by Esch McCombie with McNees, Wallace & Nurick, LLC (the legal counsel), 100 Pine Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; Ryan Sanders with Vice Capital, LLC (the developer), 2200 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110; and Matthew Witters with Eustace Engineering, Inc. (the site designers), 161 South 32nd Street, Camp Hill, PA 17011; and Martina Hedetniemi with Kramer Marks (the project architect), 27 South Main Street, Ambler, PA 19002 (aka, the "Applicants").

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they stated that Conditions #1 & #5, but that they wanted to further discuss Conditions #2-4 and to provide further background on the proposal. The Applicants referenced Condition #2 regarding the proposal to bring the buildings to the front property lines, and stated that PHFA accessibility standards required there be an awning when a front door opened onto the sidewalk, and stated that it was their understanding that awnings were not permitted to encroach into the front yard setback and public right-of-way, but they stated that they were

willing to reconsider the design if right-of-way encroachments were permitted. The Applicants referenced Condition #3 and stated it was necessary to provide access to the parking spaces in the rear of the building on Lot #3. They stated that the current configuration proposed ingress from 6th Street and egress onto Turner Alley, but that they were considering reversing that traffic flow; they noted that this might be a safer option because people leaving the parking lot would have to stop to stop at the sidewalk. The Applicants referenced Condition #4 and stated that they were willing to construct full-width sidewalks if the Planning Commission preferred, but that they would be able to installed landscaping if the buildings were moved up to the property line as well.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Planning Bureau about their thoughts on the Applicants' comments. Mr. Knight noted that building awnings could be permitted through the Easement application process and confirmed that projects of this nature went through the administrative review process and did not require Planning Commission or City Council approval. He also noted that if the proposed building on Lot #3 were reconfigured, they would be able to construct seven spaces in the rear of the building accessible from Turner Alley, and that the removal of the curb cut would enable at least two on-street spaces to be preserved. Mr. Knight noted that the project as proposed would only add three overall spaces and not five spaces, and that a redesigned site would provide more off-street parking and create a safer pedestrian environment along 6th Street. He noted that the Planning Bureau often referenced Vision Zero and recommended avoiding new pedestrian/vehicular conflict points in projects. Finally, he noted that there were full-width sidewalks north and south of the development sites, and that it was reasonable to require sidewalks along the project frontages to retain that width; he noted that small landscaping areas often went unmaintained after installation, and that he felt it would be better to focus on street trees and vegetation in planters in front of buildings. Mr. Knight noted that the Planning Bureau's concern was the long-term maintenance of the properties and having new structures reflect the design and siting of the existing buildings along 6th Street.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether Condition #2 was still relevant; Mr. Knight reiterated that it would be fairly easy for the Applicant to receive approval for the awnings, although he did note that he wasn't familiar with PHFA requirements. He stated that he presumed they allowed zero-entry thresholds at the sidewalk, but that if small ramps were required, then it was reasonable to set back the buildings a short distance. The Applicants stated that they were willing to accept Condition #4 as well as Condition #2, so long as it was in conformance with PHFA's design requirements, and that they were happy to file through the Easement application process. The Applicants stated that agreeing to Condition #3 would require rotating the building which would result in the loss of six units on Lot #3. They stated that PHFA would not allow to make such a substantial change at this point in the process, but wanted to discuss other ideas during their presentation to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Knight noted that the Applicants had originally submitted the current design during their preliminary discussions with the Planning Bureau several months ago, and that he had raised the same issue at that time, and thus Condition #3 was not a new issue of which the Applicants were unaware; he noted that he had received no site redesigns or justification for the current proposal since then. He noted that an alternative configuration might require a different design, which might necessitate a different floor plan than the proposals for Lots #1, #2, and #4. Mr. Knight

stated that the building might need to be an apartment building with a single entrance instead of the same unit footprints as the other locations.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Planning Bureau was agreeable to changing the language of Condition #2 to reflect any PHFA design requirements; Mr. Knight stated that he was amendable to changing the language of Condition #2 so that it was consistent with PHFA requirements.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project. Commissioner O'Toole noted that the Applicants had stated they wanted to provide a brief overview and background of the overall project. The Applicants gave some background on the proposal, noting that it would consolidate parcels into four tracts of land with 41 units known as "JMB Gardens." They noted that while it was technically affordable housing, they wanted to give units the size and appearance of market rate housing; they confirmed that the project would be submitted through the City's Affordable Housing program.

The Applicants provided handouts to the commissioners and City staff. They noted that the project was centered on the 6th Street/Emerald Street intersection, and that the current sites were comprised of 27 separate small lots which were owned by HRA (the Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority) and HHA (the Harrisburg Housing Authority); they clarified that they were acquiring the properties from those entities, but that they would not be engaged as a joint partnership. The Applicants discussed the necessary zoning relief, including the construction of "Multifamily Dwellings" in a small portion of RM-zoned property; a Variance to remove larger trees on all four lots; a Variance to allow encroachment of parking in the rear setback of Lot #1 along Elizabeth Alley; and a Variance to permit side yard setback encroachment on Lot #4.

The Applicants gave a general background of the existing conditions of the sites, but noted that they were generally vacant lots which featured some illegal parking. They stated that Lot #1 was comprised of 16 parcels comprising 0.6 acres, that Lot #3 was three parcels comprising 0.2 acres, that Lot #3 was eight parcels comprising approximately 0.25 acres, and that Lot #4 was two parcels comprising 0.14 acres. They described the Google Streets View images of the different development sites which were included in the handout they provided. The Applicants described the number of units and bedroom types amongst the proposed buildings on each lot, including noting which sites would include the ADA-accessible units. They noted that the Planning Bureau had initially inquired as to whether porches were possible, but noted that design would elevate the entrance and compromise the ADA accessibility and "visitability" of the units. They noted that the project had been designed to provide a front door for ever unit, so that each household had direct access to the street, which they stated would separate their project from other affordable housing developments that featured smaller units in an apartment building design.

The Applicants noted that the development on Lot #1 would feature a community center and a small pocket park including landscaping, trees, and a bike rack. They noted that 21 parking spaces would be provided in the rear of the lot, accessible from Elizabeth Alley, and noted that the design of the parking spaces would necessitate a Variance. They again referenced that each unit would have its own front door and stated that it was meant to address the community request for a project design that would incorporate into the existing rowhouse development of the

surrounding blocks. The Applicants confirmed that they had met with local residents and were planning on meeting again as the project went through the review process.

The Applicants noted that Lot #2 was located entirely in the CN district and would include eight units in one-, two-, and three-bedroom configurations; they noted that aside from the Variance to remove mature trees on-site, no zoning relief was necessary.

The Applicants noted that Lot #4 was located entirely in the CN district and would include four units in two- and three-bedroom configurations, with four off-street parking spaces in the rear of the site accessed from Turner Alley. They noted that the Variance for encroachment into side yard setback was necessitated by the inclusion of a separate entrance for the upstairs units, and noted that full-width buildings were consistent with the majority of structures within the neighborhood.

The Applicants noted that Lot #3 included both RM- and CN-zoned portions, but that the building generally conformed to the dimensional regulations in the Zoning Code. They noted that the northwestern corner of the site was located in the RM district which was likely an extension of the residential zoning further to the west that was not updated when the current Zoning Map was adopted. They noted that this designation required a Special Exception for the establishment of a “Multifamily Dwelling” use, but that the development conformed to all other requirements for that zoning district. The Applicants confirmed that Lot #3 would have ten units in one- and two-bedroom configurations, that three of the units would be ADA accessible, and that three of the five spaces proposed for the rear of the building would be ADA spaces. The Applicants noted that this was related to the aspect of the project with which the Planning Bureau disagreed, and outlined the vehicular access to and from the rear parking lot via 6th Street and Turner Alley. They noted that they were willing to work with the Planning Bureau on a mutually-agreeable solution, and asked that the commissioners take action regardless of their decision so that the project could move forward.

The Applicants noted that it would be difficult to redesign the building to front 6th Street, although they noted that they had designed that elevation to appear as a primary façade to reflect the design of the surrounding blocks. They noted that they had considered rotating the building to front 6th Street, but that it did not fit the configuration of their units, and that they couldn't redesign the building to address the Planning Bureau's comments.

The Applicants noted that all four sites had sufficient on-street parking along their frontages, and that there were two bus stops located in front of project sites to provide mass transit access. They stated that they would be addressing stormwater runoff created by new impervious surface coverage in the Land Development Plan that would follow the zoning relief requests, but noted that the impervious surface coverages for each of the sites would be in conformance with the Zoning Code and that they wanted to ensure there was a sufficient amount of green space for residents and the general public.

The Applicants reiterated that the project was designed to improve and reactivate a vacant and blighted intersection, and to improve safety in the neighborhood. They discussed the elevation drawings submitted with the project materials, and noted that any signage included in the plans

was not being submitted as part of the current requests and was only for illustrative purposes. They confirmed that any new signage would conform to the Zoning Code or submit the necessary zoning relief applications.

The Applicants noted that the design of the primary elevations was meant to have the new development blend into the character of the existing corridor. They referenced the general floor plans and noted that first-floor units would be one story in one- and two-bedroom configurations; they also noted all ADA units would be located on the first floors of buildings. The Applicants noted that the upper floors would accommodate the two- and three-bedroom units on one or two floors. The provided general sizes of the apartments, from 845 square feet for one-bedroom units to approximately 1,500 square feet for three-bedroom units; they noted that these sizes exceeded the PHFA minimum unit sizes and reiterated their intention to have the project go beyond the standard of other development projects.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the surrounding community had provided any input or made any recommendations on the project; the Applicants stated that the public was most interested in seeing the proposed designs of the project, which had just been finalized the week prior. They stated that their previous public engagement had been more informal, but that they intended on holding more formal community engagement sessions as they worked through the PHFA and Land Development Plan review processes, which would include both online and in-person meetings.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he felt the proposal was an attractive development project, and inquired as to what the project name referred. The Applicants noted that the project name might change, but that it was a reference to the grandparents of the owner of the company developing the project. Commissioner O'Toole asked whether the project was located on the site of a community garden that had been removed by the City awhile ago; the Applicants confirmed that was the case, but that it was unrelated to that removal. They confirmed that they had spoken to the current Mayor about the project before submitting it for Planning Commission review.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions, and that she liked the project.

Commissioner Green stated that she had no questions, and that she appreciated the project was being proposed in a different neighborhood from where some other affordable housing projects had been proposed in recent years. She also stated that she appreciated the design of the proposed development, which included a rowhome design that matched the surrounding neighborhood and units with their own entrances. She stated that the project seemed to consider the needs and feelings of the eventual tenants by proposing larger units with more space for each tenant. Commissioner Green stated that she felt it was necessary to include green space within the lots since there wasn't much in the neighborhood. The Applicants stated that the community center area would be for the overall neighborhood and not just residents of the development.

Commissioner Marek concurred with Commissioner Green and that she appreciated the overall project and the consideration the Applicant put into the design. She noted that the Planning Commission would be evaluating other aspects of the project when the Land Development Plan was submitted. She referenced the Condition #3 in the case report and stated that she felt retaining the proposed curb cut onto 6th Street as an egress point, instead of an ingress point, was appropriate and would provide safer operation. She agreed with the Applicants that they could not relocate their proposed building footprint in the manner necessary to provide the same number of units; the Applicants confirmed that rotating the building would result in the loss of units, although they acknowledged that a proposal to rotate some of the building but retain other units fronting Emerald Street was possible but would not have the same aesthetics that they wanted.

The Applicants stated that the curb cut would not be a “normal” curb cut, but that it would be a driveway-style curb cut that would bring vehicular traffic up to the sidewalk level; they stated that the intention was to not affect the pedestrian corridor along 6th Street. Commissioner Marek reiterated that she felt the current design was appropriate, but agreed that the traffic flow should be reversed so that traffic exited the site onto 6th Street.

Commissioner Marek referenced Condition #4 and stated that she was relatively indifferent between having full-width sidewalks and ADA-minimum sidewalks of five feet, but noted that there were currently five-foot-wide sidewalks with landscape strips fronting some of the project sites, while other sites had full-width sidewalks. She asked Planning Bureau staff whether it was appropriate to require them to have full-width sidewalks if the City had installed five-foot-wide sidewalks along these stretches.

Mr. Knight confirmed that the City had recently replaced some of the sidewalks in the area, but noted that the condition referred to Lots #3 & #4 where there were previously full-width sidewalks. He stated that he was unsure of why the sidewalks had not been constructed to their full width, and noted that the Planning Bureau had not been consulted on the project but would have strongly recommended full-width sidewalks. Mr. Knight stated that he wouldn't expect the Applicants to necessarily remove recently-installed sidewalk sections, but that if they were able to finish installing full-width sidewalks along the property frontages, it would be appreciated. He noted that if the project was intended to match the existing character of the corridor, that all of the other blocks featured full-width sidewalks. The Applicants stated that they were open to the idea of constructing full-width sidewalks along the frontages of Lots #3 & #4.

Commissioner Alsberry asked Planning Bureau staff whether they wanted to respond to Commissioner Marek's comments on Condition #3. Mr. Knight stated that it was not his intent that the Applicants would rotate the existing building footprint to front onto 6th Street, but rather that the building on Lot #3 would be redesigned. He noted that a three-story apartment building might work better than a row of two-story rowhomes for the site. Mr. Knight noted that other affordable housing projects submitted through PHFA have included a mix of rowhomes and apartment buildings, specifically an approved project for the 100 block of North 15th Street.

Mr. Knight noted, with respect to the proposed curb cut onto 6th Street, that while the Applicants might intend for drivers to navigate the site safely, observations of general driving made it

apparent that people regularly sped, rolled through stop signs, and otherwise drove in an unsafe manner. He noted that the intent of the City's Vision Zero policy was to recognize this and design projects such that mistakes could not occur or would not result in injury or fatalities, which often meant avoiding the creation of new pedestrian/vehicular conflict points. Mr. Knight noted that if the parking were in the rear, there would be less conflicts as people walking or biking in the alley would be aware they were in a roadway. He reiterated that Vision Zero meant designing the built environment in a way to protect all users, and noted that opposition to new driveways was usually included in the Planning Bureau's project reviews.

Mr. Knight noted that aside from the proposed driveway onto Lot #3, the project would be a great addition to the city, specifically citing that the unit sizes and number of bedrooms were both larger than in many other projects the commissioners reviewed. He stated that the project goals were laudable and that the overall design of the project would be a good fit for the neighborhood.

The Applicants noted that if the parking were installed off Turner Alley, there may be conflicts with other users of the road, but that a curb cut onto 6th Street would mean that drivers would have to look both ways before pulling out into the street, and that while there would be conflicts either way, they felt their design would be safer. They stated that they would be willing to consider installing signage or markings on the sidewalk to prevent conflicts.

Commissioner O'Toole asked if there were any other commercial businesses nearby besides the barbershop between Lots #3 & #4. Mr. Knight noted that there was a commercial structure to the north of Lot #2, although it appeared vacant, and that otherwise most of the commercial uses were further to the north near Schuylkill Street or further to the south near Maclay Street. He also noted that there were some institutional uses as well, including a nearby church and the Camp Curtin YMCA.

Commissioner O'Toole noted that his concern was for the loss of street parking that would accompany the installation of a driveway and whether it would adversely impact nearby businesses. Mr. Knight noted that most of the local businesses served the local community and thus their customer base largely walked, and also noted that the project would expand the customer base for local businesses by introducing 41 new residential units. He stated that it was unlikely that the lost parking would be a significant issue for any nearby businesses, but also noted that he did not want to speak for them.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that when he traveled by the barbershop, he did observe several cars parked on the street out front of the business, and that he felt the loss of those spaces might be an issue for the business. The Applicants noted that even with the loss of on-street parking, there would be a net gain of parking spaces as a result of the project. They noted that the removal of the curb cut and the installation of parking spaces in the rear of Lot #3 would reduce the number of spaces on-site and thus residents might end up parking on the street.

Commissioner Alsberry asked if there was anybody for or against the project. Laura Harding (2246 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA) stated that she was the President of Camp Curtin United. She stated that the meeting was being held in violation of the PA Municipalities Planning Code

because the annual notice of all the public meetings had not been posted. Mr. Grover interjected and stated that she was incorrect and that he had documentation confirming the notice had been posted. Ms. Harding stated that she had sent an email the previous evening regarding her assertion.

Ms. Harding stated that the Applicant had not engaged the public until Friday, January 27th, when a member of the project team emailed the organization; she stated that they replied to his email and had not gotten a response. She stated the Applicants should have engaged the community when they were in discussions with HRA regarding transfer of the properties. Ms. Harding stated that the Applicants had not informed her of the upcoming meeting when they sent the email on January 27th. She stated that neighbors in the general vicinity of the project did not receive their notification letters until Tuesday, January 31st. Ms. Harding also stated that there were actually five parks within the general area around the project site.

Mr. Grover noted that HRA and HHA were listed as co-applicants on the zoning relief documentation, and asked whether the developer was an equitable owner of the properties. He stated that the project team would have to be able to prove proof of standing for the project to proceed, which might occur via the provision of a developer's agreement from either or both entities. He noted that with the development of 41 units, a traffic study may be necessary and that if the Applicants had not conducted such a study, they should be prepared to explain why it had not been performed. Mr. Knight stated that a traffic impact study would accompany the required Land Development Plan application. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether they should include that as a condition; Mr. Grover stated that they wouldn't need to as long as it was provided as part of a future application.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had additional comments or concerns regarding the project, specifically with respect to the conditions in the Planning Bureau's case report. Commissioner Marek noted that the Applicants were amenable to Conditions #1, #2, #4 & #5, and thus they just had to determine whether they wanted to include Condition #3. She also noted that they might want to include a condition requiring formal public engagement prior to the submission of the Land Development Plan. Commissioner Marek stated that she was willing to make a motion to approve without Condition #3 and with the additional condition requiring public engagement. The commissioners then deliberated amongst themselves a bit.

Mr. Knight noted that the issue of the curb cut might be addressed through the traffic impact study that would accompany the Land Development Plan, and stated that he was willing to forgo the inclusion of Condition #3 until that application. He stated that his intention was primarily to bring the issue to the Applicants' and commissioners' attention as soon as possible, and noted that it was often a comment included in the Planning Bureau's reviews of Land Development Plans. Mr. Knight stated that he was willing to coordinate with the Applicants to consider alternatives for that aspect and the Applicants concurred. They reiterated that it would be challenging to reorient the building.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that he appreciated the Planning Bureau's flexibility and that he wasn't sure the commissioners would be able to reach a consensus on Condition #3. He advised

the Applicants to try to work with the Planning Bureau on alternatives. Mr. Knight reiterated his support for removing the condition from the commissioner's resolution, but noted that he would likely include it on the Planning Bureau's review of the Land Development Plan application.

Commissioner Marek moved, and Commissioner O'Toole seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff & Additional Conditions; the additional conditions were: that Condition #3 would be removed; and that the Applicants would hold formal meetings with the neighborhood group prior to the submission of the Land Development Plan. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

6. Variance & Special Exception Applications for 2151-2161 North 4th Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Gary Lenker with Tri-County Housing Development Corporation, Ltd., for various zoning relief requests associated with the development of five, single-family homes on-site, including: relief from the off-street parking requirements; relief from the minimum lot width; and relief from the side-yard setbacks for the end units.

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

1. The Applicant will receive approval from City Council for the accompanying Lot Consolidation, Subdivision & Land Development Plan application.

The case was represented by Gary Lenker with Tri-County Housing Development Corporation, Ltd. (the developer and local CHDO), 201 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Zane Geist with Integrated Development Partners, LP (the project designer), 430 North Front Street, Wormleysburg, PA 17043 (aka, the "Applicants"). The Applicants noted that while they had been operating in the city for 33 years, this was actually the first project they were undertaking outside of South Allison Hill.

Commissioner Alsberry asked the Applicants whether the conditions in the case report were acceptable; they confirmed that they were. Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicant had anything to add to the case report; he stated that he did not, but that they were happy to answer any questions the commissioners.

Commissioner Alsberry stated that he had no questions, and asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O'Toole stated that the Planning Bureau staff's recommendations for this project were somewhat different from the previous project, noting they had recommended that the units in the project include porches at the front entrances, while recommending sidewalk level entrances for the current project. Mr. Knight noted that he understood why the applicants hadn't wanted to install porches for the previous project, despite most of the buildings along 6th Street having them, but noted that for the current project, the buildings to the south on the east side of 4th Street all had elevated stoops and entrances. He noted that it likely had to do with the topography of the site.

Mr. Knight stated that the intention in adding such conditions were to ensure more units were ADA accessible or visitable, and noted that the condition regarding the hardscaped grocer's alley was intended to meet this design criteria in a different way. He noted that the topography of the site might make such inclusions prohibitive, but that ensuring ADA access opened up more units to a greater pool of potential tenants.

Commissioner O'Toole asked whether the project would be constructing for-sale units; the Applicants confirmed that was the case.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Green asked why the Applicants had chosen a yellow siding color for the proposed units. They responded that the drawings were not an accurate reflection of the color palette being considered for the site.

Commissioner Marek stated that she did have any comments or questions related to the zoning relief aspect of the project. She noted that given the existing conditions and lot widths of the site, it was likely infeasible to design units in a manner different from what was proposed by the Applicants. She stated that she felt the nature of the existing lots created a hardship that established a justification for their relief.

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether the Applicants had engaged the local community; they responded that they had not, but that they had mailed out the required notification letters to all property owners within 100 feet of the project site. Commissioner Alsberry reiterated that the commissioners always encouraged applicants to engage the community prior to the Planning Commission meeting to get their input.

Commissioner Alsberry asked if there was anybody for or against the project. Laura Harding (2246 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA) reiterated that she was speaking as the President of Camp Curtin United and stated that the City should be telling applicants to engage her neighborhood association. She stated that she felt like affordable housing projects were not being required to engage the communities in which they were built, and that no one in the neighborhood was aware of this project being proposed. Ms. Harding stated that cars were being towed from Hall Manor because the Zoning Code only required half a space per unit for affordable housing. Ms. Harding stated that she was not going to support relief from the off-street parking requirements for the proposed affordable units. She stated that they would be required to have more than half a parking space for the units, and reiterated that there would be objection to the project.

Commissioner Alsberry asked how they should approach voting on the related applications for the project. Mr. Knight stated that they should first vote on the zoning relief requests.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

7. Subdivision, Lot Consolidation & Land Development Plan Application for 2151-2161 North 4th Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by Gary Lenker with Tri-County Housing Development Corporation, Ltd., to consolidate and resubdivide the various lots comprising the project site into a five separate parcels on which affordable townhomes will be constructed, along with associated improvements.

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

1. The Applicant will receive approval from Zoning Hearing Board for the accompanying Variance and Special Exception applications.
2. If, possible, given the topography of the site, the Applicant should consider a building design with an entrance threshold at sidewalk level to ensure “visibility” of the structures, allowing ADA access for residents and visitors.
3. The project should consider the construction of a hard-scape grocer’s alley to provide access to the rear of the properties, as it can provide access to the rear of the HRA-owned parcels fronting Atlas Street and connect the subject properties with parking on those lots or provide access to the rear of units developed on those lots in the future.
4. The Applicants will ensure that the sidewalk is repaired to its fully width between the rear of curb and the property line, to match the sidewalk widths to the north and south.
5. The Applicant will coordinate with the City Arborist regarding the planting of any new trees, on-site or in the surrounding rights-of-way, including the design of the tree pits. The Planning Bureau would recommend the planting of two trees along North 4th Street.

The case was represented by Gary Lenker with Tri-County Housing Development Corporation, Ltd. (the developer and local CHDO), 201 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101; and Zane Geist with Integrated Development Partners, LP (the project designer), 430 North Front Street, Wormleysburg, PA 17043 (aka, the “Applicants”).

[Note: the discussion for the zoning relief application was also applicable to the Lot Consolidation, Subdivision & Land Development Plan application, but Commissioner Alsberry resolicited comments from each of the commissioners.]

Commissioner Alsberry asked whether any of the commissioners had comments or concerns about the project.

Commissioner O’Toole stated that he had no questions.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Green stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Marek referenced the Dauphin County Planning Commission’s review and asked whether any Street Vacations were necessary to effectuate the consolidation of the lots. The Applicants noted that the property along Atlas Street to the rear of the site was owned by HRA. Mr. Knight noted that there were small, disconnected “paper grocer’s alleys” that showed up on the County’s Parcel Map, but it was unclear whether they were public or private and thus

whether vacation was necessary. He noted they were around the periphery of the site and that the vacation was not necessary to effectuate the consolidation of the lots.

Commissioner Marek asked for confirmation on whether the Applicants were requesting relief from three off-street parking spaces; they confirmed that was the case. Mr. Knight referenced the narrative in the case report, and noted that the properties fronting Atlas Street to the east were owned by the HRA, and that one of them had a parking lot on-site. He stated that he wasn't sure about the use of the site, and whether any of the neighbors parking there had leases, but noted that since HRA was engaged with the Applicants on the project, they could likely work out some sort of arrangement to provide parking if necessary.

Commissioner Alsberry asked if there was anybody for or against the project. Laura Harding (2246 North 3rd Street, Harrisburg, PA) reiterated that she was speaking as the President of Camp Curtin United and stated that the community would be opposed to any parking relief required by the project.

Commissioner O'Toole moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Alsberry asked Planning Bureau staff whether there was any other business to discuss; Mr. Knight stated that there was not, although he noted that the cases continued at the beginning of the meeting would be heard at the March 1st Planning Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: 8:45 PM

Commissioner Green moved, and Commissioner Reed seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (5-0).