

MINUTES

HARRISBURG PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

April 5, 2023

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CITY GOVERNMENT CENTER
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Alsberry, Chair
Vern McKissick, Vice Chair
Jamesetta Reed
Ausha Green
Anne Marek
DeRon Jordan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shaun O'Toole

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

CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 PM

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Commissioner Reed moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to approve the minutes from the March 1, 2023 meeting without corrections. The motion was adopted by a unanimous (6-0) vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Introduction of DeRon Jordan as new Commissioner

Commissioner Alsberry noted that a new commissioner had been appointed, and asked Commissioner Jordan to introduce himself. Commissioner Jordan stated that he was a resident of Harrisburg and currently worked as a Public Transit Project Manager with Michael Baker, and noted that he had previously worked as Planner for Capital Area Transit (CAT). He stated that he was excited to join the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that although the Planning Commission reviewed the same Special Exception and Variance applications as the Zoning Hearing Board, they also incorporated community input into their deliberations and used it to guide their decisions.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that the current commissioners had served for varying tenures, with some having joined in the last few years and others serving for a decade or more. He noted that while they were a volunteer board, the commissioners took their responsibilities seriously. He noted that he conducted site visits prior to meetings to better understand the existing conditions of the site and the neighborhood context in which it was located.

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

- 1. Variance Applications for 1400 Sycamore Street, zoned Residential Medium-Density (RM), filed by George Fernandez with Fernandez Realty Group, LLC, proposing to install a non-illuminated wall sign (174 square feet) in excess of the signage regulations for the RM district.**

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

1. The proposed signage will be limited to fifty (50) square feet; this is the approximate area that the signage letters and two inches of kerning between each letter, would occupy if the words on the wall sign were stacked vertically next to each other, and thus represents the minimum deviation from the Zoning Code.
2. The signage should be relocated further to the north on the western elevation, and/or lower on the building, so as to be more visible to drivers approaching the site from the west along Sycamore Street; the Bureau feels that signage no higher than the top of the second floor will be sufficient.
3. The Planning Bureau recommends that the identification signage above the main entrance be revised to be in conformance with Section 7-325.8(a)(6) of the Zoning Code dealing with "Identification Signs."

The case was represented by Lauren McDaniel and Jonathan Bowser with Steelworks Construction, LLC (the developer and contractor), 430 North Front Street, Wormleysburg, PA 17043 (aka "the Applicants").

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

The Applicants stated that they had originally submitted the application with the belief that the large trees along Sycamore Street would impair visibility, but that they agreed with the Planning Bureau that a fifty-square-foot sign would be more appropriate for the building. They reiterated that the conditions were acceptable.

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

Commissioner McKissick stated that he had no questions as Planning Bureau staff had already addressed alternative design criteria.

Commissioner Reed stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Green stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Marek stated that she had no questions.

Commissioner Jordan stated that he had no questions.

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

Commissioner Marek moved, and Commissioner Green seconded the motion, to Approve the request with Staff Conditions. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (6-0).

OTHER BUSINESS:

Commissioner Alsberry asked Planning Bureau staff whether there was any other business to discuss. Mr. Grover introduced Ms. Farren and noted that she would be attending meetings on behalf of the Law Bureau moving forward.

Commissioner Alsberry noted that there were two individuals in attendance and inquired as to whether they were here for the one case on the agenda. They stated that they were local planners and were attending to get a sense of the review process. Commissioner Jordan noted that they were his coworkers and that they were attending to support him.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:42 PM

Commissioner McKissick moved, and Commissioner Marek seconded the motion, to adjourn. The motion was adopted by a unanimous vote (6-0).