



# *Planning Board*

February 10, 2016 – 6:00 PM – **Minutes**

New Bedford City Hall  
Public Meeting Room 314, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
133 William Street

**PRESENT:**                    **Colleen Dawicki, Chairperson**  
                                     **Kathryn Duff**  
                                     **Peter Cruz**  
                                     **Arthur Glassman**  
                                     **Alexander Kalife**

**ABSENT:**                    No members absent

**STAFF:**                    **Jennifer Clarke, AICP Acting City Planner**  
                                     **Constance Brawders, Staff Planner**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dawicki called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

## **2. ROLL CALL**

A formal roll call was conducted confirming members present as stated above.

## **3. MINUTES REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to approve the January 13, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion passed unopposed.

## **ITEM 4**

### **CASE #4-16**

**Request by applicant for Site Plan approval for new construction for expansion of an existing structure, located at 20 South Sixth Street (Map 46, Lot 69), in the Mixed Use Business and Downtown Business Overlay (DBOD) zoning districts. Applicant's Agent: Atty. Marc Deshaies, 115 Orchard Street, New Bedford, MA 02740.**

Ms. Dawicki noted that Board Member Alex Kalife was recusing himself from hearing or voting on this matter.

Att. Deshaies, representing the YWCA, introduced the project development team present this evening; Gail Fortes, Maura Kamosse-Tsongas, Cliff Boehmer architect, and Nathan Ketchell, addressed specific issues for the board. Att. Deshaies noted a project scale down from 11,000 s.f. to 6,500 s.f..

Att. Deshaies described the project location on School and South Sixth Streets, being some 12,000 s.f. in total, where an 1830 federal-style non-conforming structure now exists. He stated the proposal calls for a connecting walkway between the existing Levi Standish House and the two-story structure to be erected. He stated that though there would be no elevators, the structure will be fully handicap compliant via a ramp. Att. Deshaies stated the proposal is for the YWCA to unify their administrative and program services at one site. He then described the interior project plans. He noted that certain aspects of the planned project, namely the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

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residential units, will require an appearance before the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Att. Deshaies stated that the YWCA has been in New Bedford since 1911, founded to educate women in moral and Christian values. He stated that various components of the evolved organization are currently operating in different parts of the city, and the project seeks to unify them into one site for better managerial control and consistency of services, as well as the introduction of additional services. Att. Deshaies introduced Gail Fortes.

Gail Fortes, Executive Director of the YWCA, noted that the organization is no longer a Christian Association, but now promotes the elimination of racism, empowerment of women, and the promotion of peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. She reviewed many of the current programs facilitated by the YWCA, including widow/widower support groups, leadership development, economic empowerment, health and wellness education, and others. She stated the proposed residential units will serve low income women who are either working or working and in school. Ms. Fortes noted that many of their services are currently located within rented spaces throughout the city. She then introduced the YWCA board members present this evening.

Maura Camosse Tsongas of the Women's Institute stated she was brought on a year ago to assist in the project's financial aspects and the different funding types of the project. She explained funding sources, requirements and time constraints for the funding availability the planned project. She stated they submitted a pre-application in December to a major funder and anticipates participating in a significant funding round due in March of this year.

Nathan Ketchell, project civil engineer, reviewed the project's 3,225 s.f. footprint addition to the Standish House, including a 1,550 s.f. play area in an area which is currently concrete. He discussed the installation of new sidewalks with green scape, the handicap ramp, additional trees, and the decrease of permeable space. He then discussed drainage systems, grading, runoff, down spouts and storm water issues, to include infiltration systems and overflows to the current sewer. He stated the building addition will have new electrical and gas service which will go through the existing Standish House, with a new water system. He stated the old sewer service will be capped and a new connection installed. Mr. Ketchell then discussed site grading.

Cliff Boehmer, project architect, stated that the applicant had taken to heart recommendations and staff comments they had received to date. He noted that the previous proposal was nearly three times the size of the present proposal. He added that they are working with Mass Historical guidelines on the project as the Levi Standish House to which the proposed addition would be connected, has a preservation restriction placed on it. He discussed the 24' full building heights and described the building entrances and the handicap compliance. Mr. Boehmer then displayed and discussed the buildings, their various street views/elevations, and the proposed materials to be used. He then stated the applicant will be retaining an arborist to review landscaping issues. Mr. Boehmer stated that with such a limited budget they were trying to be judicious about materials.

He briefly reviewed the plans and design requirements, noting the renovations of the existing building, the connector and the residential area. He discussed the roof mechanical equipment locations that will prevent any street viewing, as well as the School Street stone wall that is still being clarified. He mentioned that they were looking into the possibility of eliminating the need for an on-site transformer, which will open dumpster space. He noted their willingness to work with staff on any issues.

At the conclusion of Mr. Boehmer's presentation, Att. Deshaies invited board questions.

Ms. Duff raised the issue of staff and resident parking, to which Att. Deshaies referred to a southerly parking lot where they have spaces and the possibility of renting more spaces, noting these issues [parking deficiency] will go before the Traffic Commission [for an requested additional on-street dedicated handicap space] and the Zoning Board.

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Ms. Duff inquired about the applicant's plans to address the subsurface water table in that area. Mr. Ketchell stated a 2011 geotechnical investigation was done. He also illustrated where borings were done as well as test pits, and the geotechnical investigation indicated ground water 3'-4' below the lower level floor elevation. He noted that the applicant will install a foundation drain.

Mr. Cruz questioned if the proposed building will capture runoff and put it into the system. Mr. Ketchell explained the various collection sites on the plan, some discharging to landscaped areas. He noted the two sides of the building not being piped to an underground system, but having recharge in a landscaped area. Mr. Ketchell stated he will also examine the on-site monitoring well.

Ms. Duff reiterated that the play area needs to contain porous material for infiltration. She then discussed landscaping issues, such as historic and low maintenance planting materials.

Mr. Cruz inquired as to any planned tree-trimming. Mr. Boehmer again noted they would retain an arborist in the hope they can keep the trees. Ms. Duff concurred noting the shade that would be provided to the play area.

Ms. Dawicki reminded the applicant to provide a lighting plan to the staff.

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to open the public hearing. Motion passed unopposed.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak in favor of the proposal, Councilor Dana Rebeiro stated she used the "Y" growing up. She attested to the great work done by the organization and noted that a bigger building will help them serve the community better. She also stated that as a neighbor, she has not seen any parking problems suggesting that the YWCA had been proactive in addressing parking by contracting with a private lot nearby.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak in favor of the proposal, Lena Pires, YWCA Board President and Global Learning Charter School principal, stated that she felt this proposal was the next step in growing the YWCA to more fully serve the community and the children. She commented favorably on programs provided by the organization and how more proper facilities will help to better deliver services. She expressed this project will also help outreach for the organization.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak in favor of the proposal, Jane Gonsalves, a longstanding YW board member and volunteer, discussed programs conducted through the YWCA which benefit the New Bedford community, explaining that this project will allow them to consolidate their services in a cost effective manner.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak in favor of the proposal, Councilor Linda Morad also spoke in support of the project, noting the important role the YWCA has played in New Bedford. She stated this thoughtful plan respects the beauty of the current facility and expands services for the community.

There was no response to Ms. Dawicki's further invitation to speak or be recorded in favor of the proposal.

There was no response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition.

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to close the public hearing. Motion passed unopposed.

Ms. Dawicki and the board reviewed staff comments, DPI comments, and discussed additional issues such as conditions related to the Historic Commission, et cetera, with input from Jennifer Clarke.

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to approve the site plan review for the YWCA proposed addition and renovations located at 20 South Sixth Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts with the following conditions:

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that the owner accommodate all of the staff comments with the one modification regarding the stone wall along School Street; that the owner work with the Planning Staff on the assessment and proposed repair of that stone wall; that the owner change the play area to a porous surface, either a green landscaped area or a porous surface that can allow for infiltration of water along the eastern back edge of the property.  
Motion passed 4-0.

## **ITEM 5**

### **CASE #1-16 / CASE #2-16**

**Request by applicant Greater New Bedford Community Health Center HIIP Project for a Special Permit for reduction of parking spaces, and Case 02-16: Greater New Bedford Community Health Center HIIP Project - Request by applicant for Site Plan approval for the expansion of an existing medical clinic, located at 838-842 Purchase Street (Map 53, Lots 30, 30A, 30B & 30C), in the Mixed Use Business zoning district. Applicant: Daniel P. Faber, Dan's Restoration Company.**

Dan Faber, Doolittle Ave., Dartmouth, MA, stated they had been rehired by the health center to add adult medicine area in the old High Point Building and Wellness Center, the expansion occurring in light of a grant. He stated there will be two additional floors with an elevator.

Mr. Faber stated that at present the applicant has 33 parking spaces in the parking garage, with 13 spaces located on-site, some presently unused. He stated that was the reason for the request for a reduction, and that most Health Center employees park at the parking garage. He detailed the expansion in terms of exam rooms, offices, et cetera.

He stated the project was under review with the state.

Mr. Faber explained that in 2009 they did work on the original facility, subsequently adding a ramp, a second egress, and a sprinkler system.

Kevin Caldwell of Caldwell Architectural Associates explained the plan to the board. He stated the expansion is some 2,000 s.f. in size. He stated the project, which will be the new Adult Medicine Center, will require no new services to the building requiring street work.

Mr. Faber stated that having added the Women's Health in the back of the building this addition will combine the two to provide service in the same corridor space.

Mr. Caldwell continued, addressing the façade, the elevator, the waiting area, et cetera. He noted the State Department of Public Health has requirements the applicant must meet within the new addition. He discussed ingress and egress areas and the benefits served by the project.

Ms. Duff clarified that there were thirteen parking spaces in the rear and discussed further parking conditions. She noted the February 2010 Planning Board decision indicated ten spaces available spaces provided. She added that 109 spaces are required by Planning Board calculations.

Jennifer Clarke noted that the 33 Elm Street Parking Garage spaces do not count in the space tally, as spaces eligible for counting must be on-site.

Ms. Dawicki noted the seven waivers requested by the applicant, found within the staff comments included drainage, signage, grading, et cetera.

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There was a brief discussion with regard to any Historic District encroachment and it was acknowledged that this project falls outside of the Historic District.

Mr. Faber noted the brick originally used is still available for this project and will provide a uniform appearance.

In response to Ms. Dawicki, Mr. Faber addressed the roofing material planned, the board noting their preference for a reflective roof material.

Potential sidewalk closures during the construction phase were discussed. Mr. Faber explained that originally they had completed the masonry element of the Elm Street side of the building in 32 days. He stated he expected a brief two week period for the current project.

Mr. Caldwell explained that the project would only impact some 80' of the 200' deep building, or halfway, leaving half the roof scape completely unaffected. The storage of project materials was addressed.

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to open the public hearing. Motion passed unopposed.

There was no response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak in opposition, Attorney Phil Beauregard of New Bedford addressed the board on behalf of Lina Ng of the Bamboo Garden. He expressed concern regarding the "drastic" renovation proposed for the next-door building. He noted roof problems his client has had on the Rite-Aid side of her establishment resulting in a \$40,000.00 problem that was litigated. He expressed concern that the roof structure on the proposed renovation may rise from 18' to 32' thereby creating a "valley" in effect, on his client's roof; such height changes could create potential water problems that could harm his client's property. He stated that his client has not been contacted or approached by the applicant regarding this project. He again inquired as to any protections to be offered to his client.

Att. Beauregard stated that the various addresses create confusion as to parking. He referred to a prior 2010 zoning decision that granted a reduction of parking from 60 spaces to 10 spaces. He noted the 10 spaces mentioned this evening are dedicated to 874 Purchase Street. As one entire Community Health Center operation, rather than the single unit in the proposed project, the parking requirements would be far different than those represented in the application address for the special permit. He stated this indicates the present address within the application for this project really has no available spaces.

Att. Beauregard noted the [Elm Street] parking garage arrangement for spaces is represented as a monthly lease. The building requires leased spaces on a continuing basis, not a monthly one. He stated that a lease of sufficient duration should be produced for reasonable assurance that the spaces will be there. Att. Beauregard stated that documents list 248 personnel, not including the patients who will visit the facility. He reminded the board of the impossible parking conditions on the block currently and the impact that that has on businesses in that area. He stated that though the center provides important services, the additional parking demand that this project will create will have a negative impact on the immediate business neighbors. He noted his client very much objects to the project. He cited Zoning Code Section 5320, stating he believes the criteria in that provision are not met.

There was no response to Ms. Dawicki's further invitation to speak or be recorded in opposition. Ms. Dawicki invited rebuttal from the applicant to address the concerns expressed.

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Mr. Faber stated the roof will pitch toward the [petitioner's] building's center with drains already present on the roof, and he stated he would provide documentation on that. He explained that the planned height is nearly the same height as the Bamboo Garden building. Mr. Faber stated that there is a 2010 agreement with the city that the spaces are maintained at all times. He thought that document had been submitted.

Ms. Clarke again reminded the board that off-site parking cannot be used to satisfy the calculation requirement.

There was further discussion on the parking requirements, the number of employees, and the water concerns. Ms. Duff noted there is no additional amount of water being introduced, but merely elevated, which should be addressed by the pitching [of the roof] to the center. The applicant offered to provide details on the roof drainage.

Att. Beauregard again noted that on the paperwork, the employee numbers are now 253, not 200 as Mr. Faber represented. He stated the paperwork also indicates the construction will last a year, raising serious concerns regarding the immediate impact to the neighborhood. Att. Beauregard suggested inquiring of the Traffic Commission about existing commitments for the garage spaces.

There was board discussion regarding concerns raised, such as parking spaces, more clarification on the site plans as to the roof situation and materials, the number of employees, and the duration of construction.

In light of discussion about continuing the matter to obtain further information to be provided by the applicant, Att. Beauregard raised the issue of the timeframe the board has to act on Special Permits and if any agreement with the applicant was required to continue the matter. Ms. Clarke addressed the issue. Mr. Caldwell formally requested a continuance of the matter, and stated he would provide the same in writing.

A motion was made (KD) and seconded (AG) to grant a continuance of Cases #1-16 and #2-16 as requested by the applicant to the Planning Board's March 9, 2016 meeting. Motion passed unopposed.

## **ITEM 6**

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Clarke listed notifications from abutting communities. She stated Notices of Intent had been received regarding wetlands, one for Duchaine Boulevard where DPI will demolish a building for remediation, and additionally that two small buildings on East Rodney French Boulevard are slated to be demolished and replaced by one single building.

Ms. Clarke noted that there have been efforts to create a form for applicants to use with regard to waiver requests.

There was discussion initiated by Ms. Duff regarding urban projects and that any staging should be included in site plans for public safety, et cetera, perhaps accomplished by ordinance.

## **ITEM 7**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the board, a motion was made (KD) and seconded (PC) to adjourn.

Motion passed unopposed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

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NEXT MEETING  
Wednesday, March 9, 2016

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