



## ***Planning Board***

April 6, 2016 – 6:00 PM – **Minutes**  
New Bedford Free Main Public Library, 613 Pleasant Street

### **PRESENT:**

**Colleen Dawicki, Chairperson**  
**Peter Cruz**  
**Arthur Glassman**  
**George Smith, Alternate Member**  
**Kathryn Duff, Arrived 6:20 p.m.**

### **ABSENT:**

**Alexander Kalife**

### **STAFF:**

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

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dawicki called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

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

### **MINUTES REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

A motion was made (AG) and seconded (PC) to approve the March 2016 meeting minutes.  
Motion passed unopposed.

A motion was made (PC) and seconded (AG) to take the agenda out of order. Motion passed unopposed.

### **PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

**ITEM #2 - Case 10-16: Request by applicant for Special Permit for reduction of off-street parking located at 89 North Water Street (Map 53, Lot 102), in the Industrial A and Downtown Business Overlay (DBOD) zoning districts. Applicant's agent: Amelia Ruvich/DNB LLC, New Bedford, MA.**

Amelia Ruvich of 67 Mechanics Lane, New Bedford, stated she and her partner Josh own D&B Burgers on Elm Street. She stated in light of growing demand, they are seeking to expand dining room seating by 500 S.F.

In response to a question from Mr. Glassman, Ms. Ruvich stated there were 13 spaces in the private lot and they expect to create a potential handicap spot in the alleyway.

Ms. Ruvich clarified for Mr. Smith that the loading zone is not counted as a spot.

Ms. Dawicki noted the applicant had noted in the application that they would direct customers to the Elm Street Garage right across the street, providing ample nearby parking.

Ms. Ruvich assured Mr. Cruz the handicap parking would be striped and the lot will be painted.

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

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to speak or be recorded in favor, City Councilor Dana Rebeiro stated she supports this small local business. She testified they were responsible neighbors who have been a great addition to the city.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's further invitation to speak or be recorded in favor, City Councilor Naomi Carney noted she was also in favor this project and of growing and expanding business downtown.

There was no additional response to Ms. Dawicki's further invitation to speak in favor.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's invitation to be recorded in favor:  
John Saunders, Cornell Street

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

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

After reviewing for the board the requirements to be considered, there was brief discussion on the exact number of the space reduction amongst the board members, as the figures provided encompassed parking for the whole building.

There was brief audience input on required spaces.

A motion was made (AG) and seconded (GS) to approve the request for a reduction of parking in Case #10-16, for D&B Burger, LLC, 67 Mechanics Lane, with the conditions that they will have a revised site plan, restripe the lot, and will define the handicap area.  
Motion passed 4-0.

A motion was made (AG) and seconded (PC) to suspend proceedings at 6:16 pm in anticipation of Ms. Duff's arrival. Proceedings resumed at 6:20 p.m. with Ms. Duff present.

**ITEM #1 - Case 09-16: Request by applicant for Special Permit for reduction of off-street parking located at ES South Sixth Street (Map 46, Lot 93), in the Mixed Use Business (MUB) and Downtown Business Overlay (DBOD) zoning districts, to serve a building conversion from general office to hotel use located at 222 Union Street (Map 46, Lots 32 & 33). Applicant's agent: Atty. Pamela Gauvin, New Bedford, MA.**

Att. Pamela Gauvin addressed the board on behalf of New Bedford Urban Renaissance II. She explained the request for a reduction in parking associated with a project related to a five-story vacant office building. Att. Gauvin displayed a rendering of the planned conversion into a five-story boutique hotel with 63 rooms and a restaurant and function area. Att. Gauvin noted the 37,000 SF building dating to 1916 takes up the entirety of the lot, and therefore has no available parking for the required 99

spots per city code.

Att. Gauvin noted that Dr. Yang of New Bedford Urban Renaissance (NBUR) owns a parking lot located on South Sixth Street some three city blocks away from the proposed site which Dr. Yang plans to use for hotel guests, patrons and employees. Att. Gauvin directed the board to the rendering of the proposed South Sixth Street parking area. She noted the 10 million dollar project has a tight budget which may minimize any parking lot beautification.

Att. Gauvin noted the staff comments concerning parking and traffic, and she directed the board to the applicant's proposed traffic plan showing the hotel's main entrance which proposes the removal of two parking meters to include three car length spots and a valet parking service. She reviewed the proposed traffic pattern.

Att. Gauvin noted the economic boon to the city and the creation of jobs in both construction and hotel employment and added that the finished renovation will maintain the building's historic features.

Ms. Duff asked for vehicular pattern clarification, which Att. Gauvin provided. Ms. Duff noted the traffic volume at the related intersection. Ms. Dawicki noted that the Planning Office is represented on the Traffic Commission.

Ms. Dawicki invited input on the parking lot from project engineer Christian Farland, who stated the parking lot will be restriped to city standards, Jersey barriers removed, and noted the addition of three ADA compliant spaces. He stated they had addressed all DPI concerns, including storm water, sidewalks, et cetera. He directed the board to some proposed green space.

Mr. Smith inquired as to light screening and fencing. Mr. Farland stated there was no proposal to do additional fencing, as some of the current fence is abutters' fence. With regard to lighting Mr. Farland stated there were no proposed lighting additions, noting two flood lights at the rear of the property, along with streetlights in the front. Mr. Smith stated he did not feel there was adequate lighting or light screening for neighboring residences.

Ms. Duff confirmed the addition of street trees.

In response to an additional inquiry by Ms. Duff, Mr. Farland stated there were 63 parking spaces within the lot.

Att. Gauvin noted that valet parking would allow for stacking of cars which could provide up to 72 lot spaces.

Ms. Duff stated she only found 62 spaces on the plans. Mr. Farland acknowledged the error.

In response to Ms. Dawicki, Att. Gauvin stated there would be signage noting the lot is private property and for hotel parking. There will be tags displayed in the vehicles. Att. Gauvin also noted the existence of metered parking around 222 Union Street and near Probate Court, though she did not expect a real need for any overflow parking. Att. Gauvin responded to Ms. Dawicki that they expect 10-12 employees per shift, with a total of 24-30, who would also be able to park in the South Sixth Street lot.

Mr. Cruz confirmed that the two on-site catch basins in the parking lot will be utilized. He also noted a reduction on impervious area with the proposed parking plan.

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 or be recorded in favor, Mark Hess of Hallkeen Properties stated he was very much in favor of the project. He felt overnight stays were important to economic development. He acknowledged downtown parking challenges. He felt a project of this scale delivering this ratio of spaces was an overall positive.

In response to Ms. Dawicki's further invitation to speak or be recorded in favor, City Councilor Dana Rebeiro presented letters of support from Councilors Naomi Carney, Debra Coelho, Ian Abreu, and Brian Gomes.

A motion was made (PC) and seconded (AG) to accept and place on file. Motion passed unopposed.

Councilor Rebeiro stated that she was a neighbor of the proposed site and felt this was a tremendous project which rehabs the eyesore of an abandoned building. She felt Dr. Yang and the group were considerate neighbors for the city. Walking her dog in the area at night, Councilor Rebeiro felt the area was adequately lit. She expressed the importance of the jobs the project will bring. Ms. Rebeiro stated she was grateful, as a neighbor to the project, that no more parking spaces will be taken away. She felt the applicants were doing their best to address any impact and congestion. She noted that as city activities increase, such as AHA and the "Z", the opportunity for people to stay over and enjoy our city is very important.

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

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.

Mr. Glassman felt the issue of fencing that was raised was an important one. Ms. Dawicki noted that this not being a site plan review did not leave the board with discretion over the parking lot. Ms. Dawicki stated that staff references Section 3300 of the municipal code which notes screening and landscaping stipulations that may not be being met currently, and she suggested a possible condition to have the applicant work with the city to meet the code.

Mr. Smith inquired of the applicant as to their willingness to put up fencing, to which Att. Gauvin acknowledged Mr. Smith's concerns and asked that he be mindful of the project costs, in addition to the fact that NBUR is also bringing the "bonus" of a parking lot to the project. She reviewed the areas of the parking lot with some fencing and potential natural barriers. Mr. Smith suggested arborvitaes and Att. Gauvin stated Dr. Yang was amenable to working with the city to address concerns. Ms. Dawicki reviewed some of the requirements in Section 3300 regarding screening. Mr. Farland agreed to meet with the city planner to address the issue.

Ms. Dawicki explained the board's decision must be on the parking reduction request for the site itself,

and technically there are zero spaces provided, even knowing there are some 63 available spaces at the other site. So, the decision is based on the 99 required to the zero available on the site in question.

Ms. Duff again expressed concern about the distance in the traffic pattern provided allowing for a left-hand turn. It was noted the traffic commission would also address the matter.

There being no further board questions or comments, the board discussed conditions for approval. A motion was then made (KD) and seconded (AG) to approve a reduction of parking in Case #09-16 for the property located at 222 Union Street for a relief of parking of 99 spaces for the proposed hotel with the following conditions: that the owner work with the city planning department to make certain that Section 3300 of the city code is met regarding screening, sizing and setbacks of off-street parking located South Sixth Street; that the applicant accommodate staff comments relative to omissions and changes; that the applicant revise the proposed off-site parking at South Sixth Street to 62 proposed spaces; and that the city planning work with the traffic commission regarding some valet parking concerns, and traffic in and around the block, specifically the left-hand turn with cars cueing for a left-hand turn when coming down Union Street.

Motion passed 5-0.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Ms. Clarke referenced notices received from Freetown, Dartmouth and typical notices from other communities, along with one from Mass Clean Energy which are available in the planning office for review.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

NEXT MEETING  
Wednesday, May 11, 2016