

City of Norwich
Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
Norwich City Court

March 19, 2012
7:00 PM

Present: R. Mirabito, D. DeForest, L. Bunce, S. Prentice, B. McCracken,

Absent: H. Graves, M. Stewart,

Staff: T. Dreyer, J. Lawrence, A. Donnison

Also Present: Mayor J. Maiurano, Ald. T. Bresina, A. Jones, EMO

I. Call to Order:

R. Mirabito called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. D. DeForest made a motion to accept the minutes of October 17, 2011, seconded by L. Bunce. Ayes all.

II. NBT Site Plan Review:

The location of the property being reviewed at this meeting is 45-47 South Broad Street, Norwich NY.

Brad Hall of NBT was present to go over the site plans and to answer any questions. Mr. Hall stated the plans are for façade work as depicted on the plans. L. Bunce asked if the only entrance and exit for this parking lot is off from Front Street and if so is that wide enough to handle the increased traffic flow. Mr. Hall stated yes to there being only one entrance and exit and yes it is expected to be wide enough to handle the traffic flow. D. DeForest asked if there are plans to create another crosswalk from the new location to the main branch. Mr. Hall stated no since there is one at the Front Street intersection. B. McCracken asked if there were plans for increased lighting outside along the perimeter of the parking area as the street lighting there seems inadequate. Mr. Hall stated there are no plans for additional lighting around the lot or in front of the building. D. DeForest inquired about the landscaping plans. Mr. Hall stated that the plans are to mimic the shrubbery and plantings that exist around the operations building. The bushes around the parking lot shall be approximately 6' in height, all trees will be trimmed and the plantings currently in the middle of the parking lot acting as a divider shall be removed to allow for more parking spaces.

D. DeForest asked if the sidewalks leading the current entrance of the building will be removed. D. DeForest also asked if the rear parking spaces are for employees. Mr. Hall stated yes regarding the sidewalks because that will no longer be an entrance as it was for Dollar Tree and the parking is for employees. B. McCracken asked if the building would be open to the public. Mr. Hall stated no it is an operations center only.

T. Dreyer noted that the site plans indicate a granite curb between the parking lot and the new main entrance to the building and asked if there were plans for wheelchair access. Mr. Hall stated that there will be a curb cut making the main entrance wheelchair accessible. T. Dreyer asked if the gas lines and meters were remaining in their current location. Mr. Hall stated he believed so.

J. Lawrence noted that the entrance/exit being closed that currently is off the South Broad Street side of the parking lot will probably please the NYSDOT since this parcel is in the BID and it will mean one less dumping point of vehicles onto Route 12.

S. Prentice stated that he is an employee of NBT Bank and would be abstaining from voting in regards to this project.

R. Mirabito stated that he works through NBT in connection with Mang Insurance but is not an employee of NBT.

D. DeForest made a motion to approve the site plans submitted by NBT Bank. Seconded by L. Bunce. Ayes all with S. Prentice abstaining.

III. Comprehensive Plan Review Update:

T. Dreyer stated the DP-3 Census data, which deals with economic information, is still not available. T. Dreyer provided the members with the revised proposal for on the Natural Resources section of the comprehensive plan which is fairly small. T. Dreyer noted that there are now 3 stream gauges in place along the river and creek to assist in determining rate of water rise and they have already proven to be helpful not only to our community but to others. FEMA updated the flood maps in November 2010 and they are available for anyone to view online. It was noted that it is not for the City to make a determination if a specific parcel is in a flood zone for a property owner who is being required to obtain flood insurance by their financial institution, their bank will make the final determination. A. Jones stated that some areas in what was known as Zone B have been removed. L. Bunce asked if any property owners were notified of a change in their flood zone. T. Dreyer stated they were not notified by the City and is unsure if they were notified by FEMA. A. Jones will be providing our office of a current flood map that can be hung on the wall for easier viewing. J. Lawrence noted that construction requirements in flood areas have been changing along with flood insurance rates. L. Bunce inquired about the certification of 65 Mitchell Street in regards to the remediation that took place there as well as the Label Gallery location. T. Dreyer believes that Mirabito did receive certification but is uncertain about the Label Gallery. R. Mirabito noted that in the handout it states milk trucks park there and that this is incorrect – it is fuel trucks. T. Dreyer reviewed achievements and significant events in regards to the natural resource section of the plan as they are noted on the handouts.

A. Jones encourages adding to the plan language regarding development in flood plain areas. Due to the limited space in the City of Norwich we tend to develop more and more often in flood plain areas. An example of this is on O'Hara Drive, for many years there was nothing there. Developers must weigh the pros and cons of developing in a flood zone. In our area the impact of flooding is more due to the proximity of developing near creek beds.

R. Mirabito inquired about the new construction and what the flood elevation requirements are. J. Lawrence stated that the building code requires minimum elevation to be 2 feet higher than base flood elevations. J. Lawrence also noted that even existing homes are affected by this law. If a homeowner is constructing an addition and this property is in a flood zone the addition must also meet the 2 feet above flood elevation requirements. J. Lawrence also stated that there is a 50% rule regarding construction in existing structures. S. Pelosi asked if this is in a local code or a law in which we have no say in. J. Lawrence noted that it is the NYS Building code – not a local law. He also noted that garages can be built in a flood area without meeting the 2 foot elevation requirements if the building materials are of a non-permeable nature at this time. The code regarding construction in a flood zone is constantly changing and it may be a different requirement next month. Or it can be a pole barn construction. J. Lawrence showed the members the former flood map (prior to November 2010) and stated that the best thing about the new online maps is that you can zoom right down to specific parcel to see the flood lines. It was also noted that there is a new program called EZ Form through FEMA which may help alleviating some of the cost in flood insurance. A. Jones explained the elevation ready process that was used to create the newest flood maps by FEMA.

III. Old Business:

T. Dreyer stated that he L. Bunce attended the 4 hour training last week at the county. There is an annual 4 hour training required for all members and this can also be obtained from some TV programming as well as books. B. McCracken moved to approve the minutes of October 17, 2011 with the correction on page one, section II – the word “nest” to be changed to “next”. S. Pelosi seconded the motion. Ayes all.

VI. Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 7:52pm on a motion made by L. Bunce and seconded by D. DeForest. Ayes all.