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**RENSSELAER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
7:00 P.M. – Tuesday – May 1, 2001
Conference Room – Second Floor – City Hall**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Merges, Chairman, Kenneth Downes, Vice-Chairman, Philip Smith, Philip Erlich and Gordon Reynolds.

ABSENT: Daniel Sanchez.

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Hart, Hart Engineering, Robert Brayton, Christian Connally, Barbara and Thomas Mancini, Albertine Felts, John Dunn, Fred Jeffries, Thomas Melander, Roger H. Murman, Fr. Paul Lininger, Fr. Alexis Hackett, Brother Stephen Merrigan, Joseph W. Zappone, Joseph Liccardi, Charles Valenti, Charles Moore and Daniel Moore.

REGULAR MEETING: Mr. Michael Merges called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. and it was determined that there was a quorum present.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

Motion made by Philip Erlich, seconded by Gordon Reynolds to accept the minutes as amended.

Motion carried.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Charles Valenti gave the Secretary's Report. He provided information to bring the Planning Board up to date on some projects.

Boat Launch – Bids go out on May 14, 2001, bids opened June 6, 2001, awarded June 20, 2001 with hopefully a three (3) month construction period.

Third Avenue-Third Street – Highway Division D.O.T. – moving along, final design in process. Hope by the end of this construction season, can start on that project.

Second Avenue Sewer Project – in infancy, engineering services, hopefully it will move along shortly.

Requests for Proposals – Riverfront Development – move along and try to get all done at once.

Philip Smith questioned the retention pond in the Hollow – are we at the end of time frame?

Charles Moore – Army Corps of Engineers are waiting for the permit, funding is secure.

Mr. Merges changed the agenda, will do New Business at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mancini, 1473 Third Street, area variance request.

Applicant proposes to install a 15' diameter 4' deep above ground swimming pool. Applicant is requesting an 8' side yard variance. The property is located in an (R2) Residential Zoning District.

Mr. Mancini explained that he is putting the pool closer to the house, four (4) foot from pool to garage, thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) feet from neighbor.

There are no other building issues.

Any discussion?

Motion made by Kenneth Downes, seconded by Philip Smith offered the following resolution:

“The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby recommends an area variance for a side yard setback, due to the size of the lot and other structures on this lot, to install an above ground pool at 1473 Third Street”.

Motion carried.

Mr. Mancini's next step is to the Rensselaer City Zoning Board of Appeals.

Jeffries, 6 Belmore Place, Certificate of Appropriateness.

Applicant proposes to replace the existing siding with vinyl siding at 6 Belmore Place. The property is located in a (HR) Historic Residential Zoning District.

Mr. Jeffries explained that he is replacing the present siding with vinyl siding (yellow). Also, replacing closed porch roof.

Motion made by Philip Smith, seconded by Gordon Reynolds offered the following resolution:

“The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby grants a Certificate of Appropriateness to Mr. Jeffries for 6 Belmore Place, to replace asphalt shingle siding with vinyl siding and replacement of porch roof”.

Motion carried.

Mr. Jeffries needs a Building Permit from Daniel Moore, Building and Zoning Administrator.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bob Brayton, 2 Green Street, preliminary site plan review, special use permit, SEQR Determination

The applicant proposes to construct an off street parking lot and related amenities for the 30,000 sq.ft. office building under rehabilitation. The property is located within the flood fringe overlay district and a (CI) Commercial Industrial Zoning District.

Mr. Merges opened the discussion and told the board that he had talked with Charles today. A determination can not be made tonight, must wait the full thirty (30) days before any action can be taken, thirty (30) days from April 11, 2001, for opportunity to see if any changes are made.

Last meeting discussed drainage, lighting, landscaping.

Mr. Brayton stated that he will not alter or change drainage, but would like approval for the top soil tonight.

Philip Smith – Boundry issue solved – not discussed.

Mr. Liccardi – no litigation pending – nothing filed as yet.

Joseph W. Zappone, Mr. Brayton’s attorney – square footage, minimal piece of property.

Joseph Liccardi – understand this Board has been provided with a survey, does not see anything not to proceed along the lines we are proceeding.

Steve Hart – landscaping – trees ten (10) foot on center, decided on one (1) row of trees and extend the arborvitae.

Albertine Felts – residents in the area who will be affected by the parking lot, lights all night, cars in and out of parking lot.

Mr. Merges said that these issues were brought up at the Public Hearing and comments from the neighbors have been discussed.

Drainage – serious concern – trying to take into account the needs of the residents – C/I up against residential, concerns there.

Mr. Valenti – Board requested traffic engineering study, matter be addressed between now and next meeting in writing from Mr. Brayton.

Mr. Merges – Is the parking lot project for the sole use of the building? Yes
Light Poles – Six (6) poles with shields to block light from residential area
Use of building – occupy all of 30,000 square feet for office space

Mr. Reynolds – Timer on lights – yes

Mr. Downes – Questions regarding Nimo – talked with Karen Maxwell this afternoon, she is happy with the project as it is now, would alleviate Nimo drainage, pleased with cleanup. Nimo granted a license for continuation of First Alley to Mr. Brayton.

Mr. Merges – topsoil – Mr. Liccardi said nothing should move forward until final approval – undeveloped section.

Mr. Reynolds – Topsoil and seeded would help problem for the neighbors.

Motion made by Philip Smith, seconded by Philip Erlich for the following resolution:

“The Rensselaer City Planning Commission agrees that Mr. Brayton be allowed a limited proceeding allowing top soil and seeding, northeasterly side of parking lot”.

Motion carried.

Short traffic report prior to the next meeting in June. SEQR closed May 11, 2001.

Motion made by Gordon Reynolds, seconded by Philip Smith to table ??????????????????

Motion carried.

St. Anthony on the Hudson, Intergenerational Community, 517 Washington Avenue, Draft Scoping SEQR Review.

Applicant proposes to construct 190 units of apartments, cottages and assisted living quarters for elderly citizens. The parcel is approximately 30.5 acres and is located in a (R1) Single Family Residential Zoning District. The applicant is requesting to change the Zoning to (PD) Planned Development District.

Mr. Merges – We are in the scoping process of SEQR Review on this project.

Mr. Valenti – Any further comments or questions, issues should be incorporated in the scoping document essentially as a table of content. We have received some comments from Department Heads and outside of City Hall that will be shared with the developer and ask the developer to amend the draft statement to incorporate the comments. Those comments that are appropriate for the Environmental Impact Statement should be included, those that are not should be addressed because these are issues of concern. As soon as the developer returns a final draft scope that has incorporated all the issues, what we plan to do is to transmit that to all parties and ask that they return a cognizance within two (2) weeks. What I don't want to do is to ask the developer to do an Environmental Impact Statement, then in the middle of it to say we forgot something. We would rather give it to you all at once, this is it, and please address these issues so that we can expedite the process and give them exactly what concerns we would like addressed and then they go ahead and draft an Environmental Impact Statement. We will share comments with the developer, come in with a document, we will review it and if no further changes, then that is the basis for the Environmental Impact Statement.

Mr. Smith – Negotiations on pilot program, taxes, emergency services.

Mr. Liccardi – Council with rezoning.

Mr. Valenti – Understand that this is a very important document. It will be used as a major document for the City to make its decision as to whether or not it should rezone this property. The City is under no obligation to rezone the property. This is not a use variance. An area variance where the applicant must fill certain established criteria, then the City is obligated to grant the variance and without that is subject to Article 78, this is not the case, this is pure discretionary. This is a very important document for the City to decide whether or not it should proceed. As moratorium as this project is, what the City has to decide is whether we can afford it. This document is critical in making that decision.

Mr. Smith – Timetable – sixty (60) days after received – draft scope – final scope – hear from interested parties one (1) last time.

Mr. Downes – comments from County or Water Department?

Scoping closing period.

Mr. Merges – Any discussions or comments?

Motion made by Gordon Reynolds, seconded by Philip Erlich that the Rensselaer City Planning Commission has no further comments.

Motion carried.

ADDENDUM:

Organichem, 33 Riverside Avenue, site plan review, special use permit.

The applicant proposes to install two new structures within the designated 100-year floodway. Both structures will be built two feet under the flood plain. The property is located in a Heavy Industrial (I) Zoning District.

Mr. Gary Isles is requesting a six (6) month extension – concrete slab with tank

Motion made by Philip Smith, seconded by Kenneth Downes for the following resolution:

“The Rensselaer City Planning Commission hereby grants a six (6) month extension for the previous site plan approval with all stipulations continued”.

Motion carried.

Mr. Valenti – We must take care of the needs of our customers, change package, provide more information to the Board, make a more informed decision. How can we help you as Board Members?

Mr. Reynolds – I am new, information is totally useless, don’t know what I can do with it.

Mr. Valenti – questions, please contact office.

Mr. Smith – The Planning Board does not get training necessary to make decision.

Mr. Merges – There is training with the Department of State, Web Site, training program are three (3) hour sessions, very helpful programs.

Philip Smith – discussion on compensation for the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Philip Erlich, seconded by Philip Smith for adjournment at 8:23 P.M.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles G. Valenti
Secretary
CGV:rs