

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission**  
First Floor Court Room, Rensselaer Community Center, 62 Washington Street  
**November 12, 2013**

**Members Present:**

Christine Van Vorst – Chair, James Ahlemeyer, , Bob Campano, and George Farrell

**Members Absent:**

Tom Cardamone, Bridget Swick, Lynn Feltus

**Staff Present:**

Charles Moore – Director of Planning, Jack Spath, Counsel. Tony Manfredi Asst Director of Planning

**Others Present**

Dave Gardner, Tim Bayly, among others.

**Call to Order:**

The Chair, Chris Van Vorst, called the meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission to order at 6:30PM. Roll call was taken and quorum determined.

**Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes**

A motion by Campano was made to approve prior meeting minutes, seconded by Jim Ahlmeyer. It was approved by all present. The minutes were adopted.

**Communications**

Director

A question was made by the on South Street and Washington Avenue stormwater.

Director mentioned grant application for train station redevelopment and housing rehab. In addition work being done to record Marx easements.

Terry.

**Old Business**

**None**

**New Business**

**37 Partition St-Bayly– Request for Site Plan Approval- To create first floor Laundromat and two upper residential units.**

**Rob Campano asked if layouts were the same for residential units. Mrs. Bayly presented 37 Partition. She requested approval to move forward with concept for Laundromat. Building was purchased on October 9, 2013. Shawn Redden was retained for masonry stabilization. John Dunn**

was retained for surveying and engineering. Remington blacktop would be constructing the parking area.

Laundromat would be 24 hrs. Applicant mentioned first floor awning wraparound with Partition Laundromat on sign.

Applicant explained desire to build retaining wall with possible shrubbery. Sidewalk perimeter would have box trees.

Campano asked for layout of site on a map including parking-relative to Partition. Applicant approached and displayed bearing points of parking and landscaping by drawing it for the board.

Campano asked how high the retaining wall would be. Applicant mentioned it would be 4 or 5 feet.

Campano asked what retaining wall system would be used. Campano asked if City of Rensselaer had a design guideline for retaining walls.

Van Vorst asked if 24 hr would be a problem with neighbors. The applicants rep said the intention was to market it as a 24 hr Laundromat. The Chair mentioned concern over late night traffic.

Applicant mentioned they were looking for approval for 24 hr, but not operate that way right out of the gate. Campano asked if insulation between units was typical. Chairwoman Van Vorst reiterated her concern over 24 hr.

Ahlmeyer asked what the requirements for plumbing would be and question over capability of current sewer system supporting potential volume of sewer.

Director Moore mentioned need to get input of DPW of water supply to building. Chair Van Vorst said this should be checked. Director Moore mentioned people were conceptually supportive, however qualified his statement by stating applicants should be cautious about doing too much work in advance. Jack Spath was stated the need for a variance for parking and/or greenspace and subsequently the need for a ZBA meeting.

Spath stated that pavement creates impervious surface and the need to maintain 20% greenspace. The City in the past has allowed for less than 20% as long as it was pre-existing and did not reduce greenspace further. Applicant asked if adding greenspace in the front would be enough. Spath said not enough to make up for sq footage. Campano mentioned possible pervious parking solutions. Director stated need for 20% greenspace not just impervious. Ahlmeyer stated they were changing the use of the building substantially. Chair Van Vorst stated the only solution would be a variance.

Spath mentioned retaining wall implications as well for water run-off.

Applicant asked what variance they would need. Director Moore mentioned either or depending on design. Moore stated planning board could vary requirement by 20%.

Spath mentioned properties on Broadway have gotten variances for Parking but it was up to the Applicant to decide the nature of variance requested.

Ahlmeyer questioned if 4 spaces was enough and what that was based on. Applicant asked what the use was before. Chair Van Vorst mentioned it was a market with no parking.

Campano asked if parking on 2<sup>nd</sup> St was adequate. Mentioned rear parking would be ideal for tenants and on street parking would be ideal for Laundry patrons. Campano stated he did not have an issue with 3 parking spaces. Van Vorst stated they would have to make a positive recommendation. Ahlmeyer asked if there was a curb cut-Director Moore mentioned there was an existing curb cut. Ahlmeyer asked how parking design would be laid out in relation to the curb cut.

Spath mentioned if they had a lay-out of parcel it would be easier to make recommendations. Stated might be easier to do a 1 car variance for 2 parking spaces to add green-space.

Campano continued the point by asking about apartment access. Applicant approached and discussed access on basic drawing-access would be through the kitchen in the rear.

Campano asked Director Moore if they should defer a decision until they had more detailed drawings.

Campano mentioned a list of concerns:

1. Clear access for each apartment
2. Conditions mentioned-size of water waste line and supply line.
3. Approval of trees and shrubs based on trees and shrubs-plus large trees every 40 ft.
4. Concerns about run-off and engineers recommendation.
5. Whether they needed a conditional approval.
6. Temporary permit and scope of work being for stabilization.
7. Tapping fee cannot be waived-whether city digs the hole as justification. (Van Vorst asked if City did the digging) Director mentioned Water Department had to be familiar with this work.
8. Venting of the dryers and fire code for fire stops.
9. Zoning Board of Appeals Variance for Parking and/or greenery-need for dimensions to determine 20%.
10. How much signage you can have without a variance.
11. Power needs
12. 24 hr operation

Ahlmeyer mentioned he had a lot of questions with layout particularly with Apartments and location of egress. Ahlmeyer stated concern of being asked to approve something without plans and layout of facility.

Van Vorst stated the request should be tabled. Campano asked if there was any value in a conceptual approval and a specified list of needs for a subsequent meeting. Jack Spath stated this would be risky and Applicant should be getting full approval before any work is done. Van Vorst shared this concern as well as Campano. As well as need for plans. Members asked if a special meeting would be justified. Spath stated it did not behoove anyone to have a special meeting.

Ahlmeyer made a motion to table this application. Campano seconded. All were in favor.

**Adjournment:**

Chris Van Vorst made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Bob Campano, and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21 PM.

**Next Meeting:**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2013 at 6:30 PM.

**Record of Decisions:**

An official record of decisions noting the details of motions and votes from this meeting along with any conditions & stipulations of approval has been filed with the City Clerk and a copy maintained in Planning Department records.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Berheide, Secretary