

Pleasantville Planning Commission
July 8, 2015

The Pleasantville Planning Commission meeting was called to order by Russell Klein, Chairman, at 8 P.M. on Wednesday, July 8, 2015. Attending the meeting were: Russell Klein, Chairman; David Keller, Stephen Harrigan, Philip Myrick and Robert Stone, Commissioners; Sarah Brown, Planning Consultant; Robert Hughes, Building Inspector; and Mary Sernatinger, Secretary. Absent: Scott Blasdel, Commissioner. There is one vacancy on the Commission.

- (1) **York Funding, LLC, 98 Washington Avenue**. Proposal to convert the existing mixed-use structure (Mercantile, Office and seven (7) Residential Apartments) into a Mercantile and Residential mixed-use structure consisting of ten (10) one-bedroom apartments and four (4) two-bedroom apartments with seven (7) apartments on each of the second and third floors. Email dated June 24, 2015 from Jorge B. Hernandez, Architect, addressing previous comments from the Planning Commission; Email dated June 17, 2015 from traffic engineer addressing the Commission's concerns; revised drawings T1, A1, A2 and A7 by ARQ, HT, LLC dated June 24, 2015. *Continued review*. Present: Jorge B. Hernandez, Architect.

Mr. Hernandez reviewed the changes he made to the plans to address the Commissioners' concerns:

- Maneuverability on the lower level was improved by eliminating a parking space and creating a storage area. There is enough room for a turn-around, but not enough for a car to be parked.
- A vestibule was created at the lower level with restricted access. It would be accessible to residential tenants only.
- The handicapped parking space on the lower level would be designated for a residential tenant.
- Retail space on the main floor was reduced.
- An additional handicapped space was created on the upper level to be used by someone going into the retail store. This would eliminate the need for a handicapped person to use a ramp from the lower level.
- The width of the ramp was reduced so that a sidewalk could be added.
- A separation between the tenant access and store access on the first floor was created. In order to go upstairs to the residential area, a person would have to have a key.
- Steps to the lower level were added.
- A parking space was also eliminated on the upper level and a storage area was added, just as on the lower level, to improve maneuverability.

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- Garbage: There will be seven 96-gallon containers, which Mr. Hernandez believed would be sufficient for one week's garbage. The garbage containers will be in an enclosure, and they will be maintained to keep the area free of smells. Also, the garage is open in the back, so there will be air flowing through. A superintendent will put garbage and recycling out on the sidewalk for pickup. Mr. Hughes said the sidewalk is wide enough to accommodate the garbage without it obstructing pedestrian traffic.
- The access was relocated. There is now one exit to the lobby and one exit to the walkway.
- To improve visibility, the solid wall by the ramp was replaced with a railing.
- Lighting: There will just be a small light at the entrance and the rest of the light will come from the streetlights.
- The balcony in the center will be covered at the first level to help with snow removal. There will be drainpipes from the roof.
- It hasn't been decided yet whether the superintendent will be on-site or from a management company.

The reduction of the size of the retail space decreased the parking requirement by one, but two parking spaces were eliminated to improve maneuverability. The variance was granted based on there being 25 parking spaces, but there are now only 24. Ms. Brown said she would need to seek legal opinion as to whether the variance still applies (e.g., did the variance require 19 spaces to be provided or was the variance specifically for a deficiency of 6 spaces?) Mr. Hernandez said that if it means he would have to go back to the Zoning Board for a new variance, he would eliminate one of the two handicapped spaces, use that space for two standard parking spaces, and bring the count back to 25.

Mr. Hughes said the storm water system would have to be reviewed now that there is a roof. Water has to be kept on site; overflow can go into the stormwater system. The site has to be inspected to see exactly what was installed and where the runoff is going. Based on the fact that the building was not constructed as designed, it cannot be assumed that the stormwater system was installed as it was supposed to have been.

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Mr. Hughes said that the building never got a certificate of occupancy, and the stormwater system has to be documented before a CO can be issued.

Mr. Hughes said that additional improvements to the apartment layouts are needed. There are columns in the middle of the hallways that have to be removed.

Mr. Hernandez said the trash chute would be removed.

The calculation of floor area does not include porches, so Ms. Brown said the balconies would not be considered part of the square footage.

Mr. Klein suggested a ledge be constructed between the properties.

Mr. Hughes noted that the floor plans on drawings A-2 and A-5 are different. Mr. Hernandez said A-2 is correct and he will correct A-5.

Ms. Brown reviewed comments she had submitted in her July 8, 2015 memo to Russell Klein and the Planning Commission.

- A crosswalk (painted on the ground) is recommended from the handicap space to the lower level lobby area.
- Reducing the width of the ramp on ground level to 18 feet is acceptable.
- With regard to the modifications that Mr. Hernandez had made to improve maneuverability, Ms. Brown said it was acceptable the way it was before when the mechanical room was there. She recommended putting the parking spaces back and eliminating the storage rooms. She said the maneuverability is not ideal, but the traffic engineer said it would work. Mr. Hernandez thought he might be able to switch parking space #14 with the storage area to improve maneuverability.
- Residents and patrons using the stairway or the elevator would have access to the residences. Mr. Hernandez said he will make all access from the lower level restricted.
- Mr. Hernandez said parking for renters would be reserved, and he will note that on the plan.

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- With regard to enlarging the proposed windows along the side of the building, Mr. Hernandez said they are very expensive. It might be less expensive to add more of the small windows rather than getting larger ones. The windows are non-operable.
- There are problems with regard to emergency access. Mr. Hughes said it might be necessary to have another door in the lower level where stairs only go up, without getting into a secured area. The door would have to be locked to prevent people from going down those stairs.
- Mr. Hughes said the mechanical room is under the parking ramp, not under the apartments. He said it might not be feasible to have the mechanical room where it is proposed.

Mr. Klein commented that the large number of bollards around the handicap space looked restrictive. Mr. Hernandez said he could remove some of them to make more room.

Five of the parking spaces can be for compact cars, and the remaining 14 must be for standard cars.

Mr. Hernandez said that each apartment would have its own boiler, hot water heater, etc., and he will show them on the plans. He believes there are ducts in the building. The existing mechanicals are on the roof. Mr. Hernandez said there would still be some mechanicals on the roof.

Mr. Hughes said the building will have to be opened up and/or infrared light will have to be used to make sure the structure is stable. He thought it would be necessary to practically strip the building down to the frame and reconstruct it.

The current building code has to be applied to this building, as if it were new.

Mr. Hughes strongly suggested that Building Code and Fire Safety issues be reviewed to make sure the accessibility requirements are met. He said there has to be a certain amount of “refuge” space in a stairwell, and two accessible means of egress are required. One would be the elevator, but a second egress needs to be provided.

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Mr. Klein told Mr. Hernandez that a number of issues needed to be addressed before a Public Hearing could be scheduled. Since the Commission does not meet in August, this matter won't be on the agenda again until September. If all issues are satisfactorily addressed by the September 8 meeting, it might be possible to have a Public Hearing on September 22.

Mr. Harrigan noted that since this is a special use application, it should go to the Public Safety Committee for review. Mr. Hughes said he would arrange that.

Mr. Myrick said the parking calculations should be noted correctly as 1 parking space per 300 square feet of commercial space. The calculation result is correct, but the basis for the calculation needs to be changed from 250 to 300.

(2) **Minutes**

The minutes of the June 10, 2015 meeting were accepted with two corrections from Mr. Klein.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Sernatinger
Secretary

These minutes were accepted as submitted and are ready to be FILED.