

# **January 8, 2002 - Regular Planning Board Meeting**

CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE

PLANNING BOARD

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MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2002

525<sup>th</sup> Meeting

Present were: Messers: Almeida, Cunha, Fisher, Gerstein, Poland, Robinson, Sullivan, Jeanne Boyle (staff), Diane Feather (staff), Zac Gordon (staff), Patrick Hanner (staff), Steve Coutu, Public Works Director, and William J. Conley, City Solicitor.

## **I. SEATING OF ALTERNATE MEMBER**

An alternate member was not seated as all regular Board members were present.

## **II. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

### **A. Minutes of October 23, 2001**

On a motion by Mr. Almeida, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the minutes of October 23 were approved by the Board;

### **B. Minutes of November 13, 2001**

On a motion by Mr. Almeida, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the minutes of October 23 were approved by the Board;

### **C. Minutes of December 11, 2001**

It was noted the minutes of December 11 were not available yet.

## **III. APPROVAL OF PLANNING BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

On a motion by Mr. Almeida, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the Board approved the following correspondence.

A. Memo dated 12/13/01 to the City Council Re: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendments.

## **IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Appl. #2001-17 Minor Subdivision - Tobias Freitas

Patrick Hanner of the Planning Department stated that the applicant is proposing a two lot minor subdivision. The parcels of land are located at 174 First Street in an R-6 zone. The proposed lot to be subdivided consists of 10,030 square feet and the applicant proposes to create two lots, each lot consisting of 5,015 square feet. A single-family residential structure is located and will remain on lot 2. On lot 1, a 24' wide by 48' residential dwelling with a garage is proposed to be constructed. Sewer, water, and gas are available to the existing and proposed parcel.

Mr. Hanner explained that an R-6 zone requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet with a minimum lot width of 50 feet, minimum lot depth of 100 feet, front setback of 15 feet, and rear setback of 20 feet. Two zoning variances are required for this subdivision. First, the existing dwelling will require a dimensional variance for the proposed side yard and second, a variance is required for the proposed off-street parking. He also noted that for an R-6 zone, section 19-145 requires an eight-foot side-yard setback where an 3.84-foot setback is proposed. The less than 4-foot side-yard setback represents a significant lack of privacy for the future property owners and a safety issue for the existing building. Access to the side of the existing building, for general maintenance or in the event of a fire, would be greatly impeded with less than 4 feet for a side-yard setback. The proposed dimensions of the driveway, 20 feet long and 22 feet wide, with a portion of the driveway intended to serve as a single stall will encourage the parking of more than one vehicle in the front-yard of the proposed building, prohibited by section 19-284. In addition, the portion of the driveway that is intended to be a single stall, extending along side of the proposed dwelling, is too narrow to accommodate a parked vehicle, 8' by 20' is proposed where the minimum stall dimension stated in section 19-282 is 9' by 20'.

Mr. Hanner noted that during site visits to this property it was observed that the existing dwelling appears to be used as a business with 3 to 4 parked vehicles located on the property and adjacent side streets. Increasing the density and use of the property would also increase the number and density of future parked vehicles on the property and adjacent streets.

David Gardner, RLS and Mr. Freitas were present to answer any questions the Board may have. Mr. Gardner noted that the overhang on the existing house was actually two feet.

Chairman Poland noted that part of the staff's recommendation of denial related to the neighborhood not demonstrating any demographic or housing characteristics that would justify an increase in the density of housing, and asked if the Board would be seeing that on all future recommendations. Ms. Feather replied no.

Ms. Feather asked Mr. Freitas to clarify the vehicles parked on and around his property. Mr. Freitas said that all the vehicles in the driveway and on the street were associated with his property and business.

Recommendation

The Planning Department recommends the Planning Board deny this proposed subdivision for the following reasons. First, the neighborhood the proposed subdivision is located in has not demonstrated any demographic or housing characteristics that would justify an increase in the density of housing. Second, the proposed 8-foot side yard setback represents a severe lack of privacy for the future property owners and a safety issue. Third, the 22-foot width driveway will encourage the parking of more than one vehicle in the front-yard, Fourth, the portion of the driveway that is intended to be used a single stall is too narrow to accommodate a parked vehicle. In addition, it is the opinion of the Planning Department that this subdivision represents an encroachment of residential development that will deteriorate the scenic landscape of the Veterans Memorial Parkway, East Bay Bike Path, and surrounding open space.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the Board voted to deny the proposed subdivision.

#### Roll Call Vote

Mr. Almeida	Nay
Mr. Fisher	Nay
Mr. Robinson	Nay
Mr. Sullivan	Nay
Chairman Poland	Nay

#### B. Public Hearing - Recreation Conservation and Open Space Plan Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions and Comprehensive Plan Elements - Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plans (Memo to the Board enclosed)

#### Comprehensive Plan Update - Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Plan Resources

Senior Planner Zac Gordon explained that Planning staff had completed a draft rewrite of the "Recreation, Conservation and Open Space Resources" section of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Gordon added that this plan was a companion to the RCOS Plan Element and that both sections were based upon the RCOS Plan approved by the Planning Board and City Council in 2001. Mr. Gordon gave the Board an overview of the sections of the plan update as follows:

- • Inventory & Analysis of Existing Conditions
- • City Recreation Facilities
- • Inventory of Existing Recreation Facilities and Areas
- • Conservation and Open Space
- • Recreation Standards
- • Recreation Programs
- • Funding and Administration of Recreation and Open Space Resources
- • Analysis of Existing and Future Needs

- • Planning Issues

Chairman Poland complimented the staff on the plan and asked if there were any questions by members of the Board? The Board asked for clarification on several components of the plan, including public access to the shoreline. Mr. Gordon distributed a listing of right-of-ways located on the Terrace. Mr. Gordon noted that at present there was no signage to identify these access points but this could be done.

Mr. Poland asked if there were any members of the public who wished to address the Board concerning this plan? David Kelleher, Chairman of the City's Historic Properties Commission, asked if there were any new plans for the Hunts Mills site in this plan element? Mr. Gordon said no, that the part of the plan dealing with this site has not changed from the previous RCOS plan.

Mr. Sullivan made a motion that the Planning Board approve the draft RCOS Plan Resources section of the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Planning Department and to forward to the City Council for their adoption; second Mr. Fisher. Vote 5-0. Motion approved.

#### Roll Call Vote

Mr. Almeida	Aye
Mr. Fisher	Aye
Mr. Robinson	Aye
Mr. Sullivan	Aye
Chairman Poland	Aye

#### C. Comprehensive Plan Update - Veteran's Memorial Parkway and Corridor Specific Plan

Ms. Feather noted that the Veteran's Memorial Parkway and Corridor Specific Plan is proposed to be added to the Land Use Plan Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

As the Board is aware, the East Providence Comprehensive plan, Land Use Plan Element, includes Specific Plans for five "critical areas" of concern within the City. The intent of these specific plans is to provide policy statements, goals, objectives and action programs that go beyond the general and comprehensive policy statements, goals, objectives and action programs of the Plan.

Given the unique character of the Veteran's Memorial Parkway in East Providence, staff is recommending adding a "Veterans Memorial Parkway and Corridor Specific Plan" within the Land Use Plan Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Parkway Critical Area, as shown on Figure LU-7, extends from Second Street, near Mauran Avenue, for a distance of approximately 2.3 miles and terminates at the intersection of Pawtucket Avenue (Route 103) at Bradley Hospital. The Critical Area consists of those

properties immediately abutting the right-of-way of the Parkway, as well as those properties within viewshed corridors of the Parkway.

Ms. Feather noted that the Veterans Memorial Parkway is an excellent example of the parkway transportation movement of the early twentieth century, and is significant for its association with the Greater Metropolitan Park Plan for Providence, and for its design by the nationally prominent Olmsted firm. The Parkway was designated a Scenic Roadway by the Rhode Island Scenic Roadways Board in 1991. The Parkway has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Ms. Feather noted that staff feels it is important to have this Specific Plan in place before any new development, particularly large-scale development, occurs on the Parkway.

Board members noted that the current weight restrictions prohibiting heavy vehicles on the Parkway do not appear to be enforced.

#### Motion

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Fisher, the Board voted to recommend City Council approval of adding this specific plan to the Land Use Plan Element and asked that the Board's memo to the Council include language seeking police enforcement of current weight restrictions on the Parkway.

#### Roll Call Vote

Mr. Almeida	Aye
Mr. Fisher	Aye
Mr. Robinson	Aye
Mr. Sullivan	Aye
Chairman Poland	Aye

### **V. CONTINUED BUSINESS**

#### A. Staff Report

Ms. Feather advised the Board of a meeting to be held January 14, 2002 regarding the Warren Avenue revitalization efforts and noted they were all welcome to attend.

Ms. Feather noted that staff was preparing submissions for the Transportation Enhancements Grant Program and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Feather noted that the RIDOT resurfacing and associated improvements for Broadway and Taunton Avenue would commence in the spring.

**VI. COMMUNICATIONS**

**VII. ANNOUNCEMENT**

A. Next Meeting -*February 12, 2002, 7:30 p.m., Room 306*

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Poland, Chairman

**PP/DMF/sac**