

**BRISTOL ZONING COMMISSION
MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING OF WEDNESDAY JUNE 4, 2020
7:00 PM
WEBEX MEETING**

CALL TO ORDER:

By: Chairman Provenzano

Time: 7:02 P.M.

Place: City Hall

ROLL CALL:

MEMBERS	NAME:	PRESENT	ABSENT
REGULAR MEMBERS:	Louise Provenzano (Chairman)	X	
	Michael Massarelli (Vice Chairman)	X	
	Richard Harlow	X	
	David White (Secretary)	X	
	Thomas Marra	X	
ALTERNATE MEMBERS	Marc Gagnon		X
	Susan Tyler	X	
STAFF	Robert Flanagan, AICP, City Planner	X	
	Edward Spyros, Zoning Enforcement Officer	X	

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Application #2368 – Special Permit for parking for a public school on a separate lot under different ownership at an easterly portion of 18 Main Street; Assessor’s Map 30, Lot 96 (pt); I (General Industrial) and BD-1 (Downtown Business) zones; City of Bristol Department of Public Works, applicant.
2. Application #2369 – Revision to an Approved Site Plan for a public school at 100 and 120 Memorial Boulevard and an easterly portion of 18 Main Street; Assessor’s Map 30, Lot 114-1, 114 & 96 (pt); R-40 (Single-Family Residential), I (General Industrial) and BD-1 (Downtown Business) zones; City of Bristol Department of Public Works, applicant.

Chairman Provenzano explained Application #2368 and Application #2369 would be heard concurrently, but voted on separately. She also designated regular Commissioners White, Harlow, Massarelli and Provenzano to vote on Application #2368 and Application #2369 this evening. She also designated alternate Commissioner Tyler to sit in place of regular Commissioner Marra because he was having technical difficulties this evening.

The Commission acknowledged receipt of the following items in their electronic packets: a letter dated May 5, 2020, from Attorney Wyland Dale Clift to the Corporation Counsel Department, regarding the Barnes Group authorization for the project and application; a letter dated April 29, 2020, from ToDesign, regarding the Zoning Commission Site Plan Approval Narrative of the changes to the addition, in particular was the building from 11,606 sq. ft. to 6,724 sq. .ft. and the first set of Site Plan Review Committee comments, dated May 19, 2020.

The following persons reviewed Applications #2368 and #2369 with the Commission, on behalf of the applicant: Attorney Barry Thompson, 49 Broad Street, Plainville; Angela Cahill, AIA, of QA&M, 195 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington; John Tunsy, AIA, ToDesign, 144 West Main Street, New Britain; Ryan Scrittorale, P.E., Alfred Benesch & Company, 120 Hebron Avenue, Glastonbury and Nancy Levesque, P.E., City Engineer, City of Bristol, 111 North Main Street.

Attorney Thompson explained the Commission approved about a year ago a Site Plan and Zone Change for these properties. The zone was proposed to be changed from an industrial zone to a residential zone for a .65 acre parcel owned by the Barnes Group.

The original zone change parcel was contingent upon all three properties being amalgamated together into one master parcel/school campus which would provide for the expanded parking needed for the school property and on Memorial Boulevard. After a determination, the Barnes Group determined the parcel was not their first choice for the parking.

They negotiated with the City Corporation Counsel for a long-term lease for the initial parcel for thirty years and four separate five-year extensions for a total of fifty years. As such, this eliminated the need for the zone change, but now required a Special Permit for the parking on a separate lot.

Attorney Thompson explained regarding the Revision of Approved Site Plan, the request was for a smaller addition that would reduce the parking spaces and the construction project. The parking would be located on the Barnes parcel, but the City would not be the property owner and the City would have the long-term lease of the property. This required the new applications.

Ms. Cahill, AIA, explained the prior plan had a rear building addition and the parking. She explained the plans had a financial overage and the addition had to be reduced. Also, there were no changes to the previous approved bus route.

Mr. Tunsy, AIA, reviewed the existing approved plans that would be the same with the main entrance and bus route to the east of the building; the parent drop off area was to the north; the loading area, dumpster and transformers were near Willis Street and staff parking spaces were to the south of the building. The turf and track would be renovated. There are 209 parking spaces proposed and 35 parking spaces on the Barnes Group parcel. The comments requested the existing 38 parking spaces on the Barnes Group parcel be reduced that would be reduced to 35 parking spaces (three spaces relocated to the main property.) The intent was to merge 100 Memorial Boulevard with 120 Memorial Boulevard. The previous approved addition was for 11,106 sq. ft; the proposed addition is 6,724 sq. ft. There are proposed outdoor steps for a classroom purpose. The landscaping plan utilized Low Impact Development regulations and bio-retention areas. There were no Variances required. He reviewed the bus traffic route (ingresses Willis Street/egressed Memorial Boulevard.) The Barnes Group property would have curbing, landscaping and a lighting plan (2 building flood lights to reduce construction.)

Mr. Scrittorale, P.E., reviewed the civil engineering plans, which only changed slightly for stormwater and erosion sedimentation control (inaudible) that had a reduction in storm water surface runoff and the bio-retention area removed from the Barnes Group property. The plan complied with the requirements on the north and south portions of the property, which would be an improvement. An item removed from the storm water system. The permeable pavers on the north parking lot because of maintenance concerns and replaced with two dry wells. The erosion sedimentation controls were standard items. The stockpiles would be out of the way of floodways and floodplains. They received an Inland Wetlands approval on June 3, 2020 for the modification of the Site Plan. They received ConnDEEP approval for the stormwater construction activities

Ms. Cahill, AIA, reviewed the architectural plans. The addition has two loading docks, one on the north side for theatre deliveries and one on the southwest for maintenance. The change was the dumpster and equipment would be screened and also screened with landscaping. The entrance would remain the same accessible for all people. The west addition was changed with a smaller footprint. She reviewed the floor plans. A few program spaces were eliminated, but they achieved the program needs. The gymnasium would be converted for the music program, equipment and storage. She reviewed the ground floor plans of the historical main entrance, art gallery, black box studio theatre, offices, gymnasium, backstage studio theatre and mechanical room. The wing walls screened the mechanical equipment and service deliveries. She reviewed the building elevations. A very tall parapet would screen the mechanical room area equipment and also the gymnasium equipment room.

After inquiries by the Commission, respectively, Ms. Cahill explained the building would be air conditioned. There are two large and two small practice rooms. The prior plan had a 650-seating capacity, but the new plan reduced the lobby and the seating was increased to the mid 600 seating capacity. These would be full time middle school students with a range of 75 to 100 students per grade, within Bristol only.

There would be high school students there for arts classes that would be mainly at their high school (depending on their schedules.) The maximum is 525 students at one time. Regarding the bus route on Memorial Boulevard, the City Ordinance was vague, but there was a sign for personal vehicles only. Also, the First Student Bus Company has received phone calls when they do not go east on Memorial Boulevard, but received calls when different buses use Memorial Boulevard. She attended the Park Department Meeting regarding the bus route and requested them to clarify the Ordinance of using all of Memorial Boulevard, but the Ordinance has not been clarified yet. There were difficulties egressing to South Street. They had time to clarify this because the occupancy was not until 2022.

There were a brief inquiries and discussions with Mr. Scrittorale, P.E., Ms. Levesque, P.E. and the Commission regarding the bus route on Memorial Boulevard; also, Memorial Boulevard not having structural changes, but part of Memorial Boulevard being converted from two lanes to one lane with a bicycle route with no bus difficulties. The streets the Parks Department allowed buses on off of Memorial Boulevard. No "U" turns were allowed on Memorial Boulevard near the monument.

The Commission commented they have seen tractor trailer trucks, various vehicles and occasionally a bus going down Memorial Boulevard. After a brief discussion, the Commission noted they usually discussed the traffic with Site Plans, but the Park and Recreation should listen to this recording and consider the Commission’s concerns. The Commission requested stronger signage on Memorial Boulevard or strengthening the City Ordinance, so it was not vague.

After inquiries by the Commission, Mr. Flanagan explained this was a City Ordinance, but it pertained to the area that was considered a park. The following persons spoke in favor of these applications: Attorney James Ziogas, 104 Bellevue Avenue and Justin Malley, Executive Director, Economic and Community Development, City of Bristol, 111 North Main Street.

Attorney Ziogas explained this would be an improved adaptive reuse of the property for the children of Bristol, which should be approved. Mr. Malley supported the plan because it would help him in his job and his Economic Board to improve and focus on the downtown area. For reasons they have to get people into the downtown area and give them a reason to go to the downtown area because they may not have any reasons to go to the downtown area.

This will be a performance arts center, which people would attend and then likely go to different area businesses. This was a “feather in the cap” for the City and Bristol’s school system. Also, an obvious benefit was potential future residents reviewing school systems, which may make people move to Bristol and thereby encourage young families to grow in Bristol.

No one spoke against the application.

Mr. Flanagan explained that Staff has received comments, which have been mainly addressed, but they would respond within the next week and work with the applicant’s engineers to come up with a signed plan. The Staff was in favor of the applications.

After inquiry by the Commission, Mr. Tunsy explained the with the previous application they were proposing to close the entrance from the Barnes Group off of Willis Street for the employee parking lot, but with negotiations they wanted to keep this opened. Therefore, there is no change for the curb cuts on Willis Street.

Chairman Provenzano explained she would discuss how they would address a letter with Mr. Flanagan after they close the public hearing.

The public hearing #2368 is closed.

By: Massarelli

Seconded: White.

For: Massarelli, Harlow, White, Tyler and Provenzano.

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The Commission was in favor of the applications. This will be a wonderful project for the downtown area. This would be an improved reuse of the property, which would be positive addition to the downtown for the City with the school and the theater. This was a professional plan and their questions were answered.

MOTION: Move to approve Application #2368 –Special Permit for parking for a public school on a separate lot under different ownership at an easterly portion of 18 Main Street; Assessor’s Map 30, Lot 96 (pt); I (General Industrial) and BD-1 (Downtown Business) zones; City of Bristol Department of Public Works, applicant.

By: Massarelli

Seconded: Harlow.

For: White, Tyler, Massarelli, Harlow and Provenzano.

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The Application #2368 is approved.

The public hearing #2369 is closed.

By: Massarelli

Seconded: White.

For: Tyler, Harlow White, Massarelli and Provenzano.

Against: None.
Abstained: None.

MOTION: Move to approve Application #2369 – Revision to an Approved Site Plan for a public school at 100 and 120 Memorial Boulevard and an easterly portion of 18 Main Street; Assessor’s Map 30, Lot 114-1, 114 & 96 (pt); R-40 (Single-Family Residential), I (General Industrial) and BD-1 (Downtown Business) zones; City of Bristol Department of Public Works, applicant, be approved, with the following stipulations:

1. The Site Plan shall not be signed off until all remaining staff comments have been addressed and the plan revised accordingly.
2. All site improvements which have not been satisfactorily completed by the time a Certificate of Occupancy is applied for shall be bonded in accordance with Section XI.A.16. of the Zoning Regulations. The performance bond shall be posted by the applicant with the City before the Certificate of Occupancy is issued.
3. Evidence of the merger of Map 30, Lot 114 with Map 30, Lot 114-1, must be presented to Staff for approval and then depicted as such on the final Site Plan, prior to plan sign-off.

By: Massarelli

Seconded: White.

For: Massarelli, Harlow, White, Tyler and Provenzano.
Against: None.
Abstained: None.

The Application #2369 is approved.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Update of Alternative Signage Program at 597 Farmington Avenue (Bristol Plaza); Assessor’s Map 53, Lot 128B; BG (General Business) zone; Federal Realty Investment Trust, applicant.

Chairman Provenzano noted that Commissioner Marra would resume his seat because he was not having technical difficulties. She designated regular Commissioners Harlow, Marra, Provenzano, Massarelli and White to vote on the Update of Alternative Signage Program at 597 Farmington Avenue.

The Commission acknowledged the following items in their electronic packets: an e-mail dated June 3, 2020, from David Webster, Director of Development, of Federal Realty Investment Trust to Robert Flanagan, City Planner, regarding an attachment for the signage; a letter dated June 3, 2020, from David Webster, Director of Development, of Federal Realty Investment Trust to Robert M. Flanagan, AICP, regarding an inventory of existing and proposed new signage for the Bristol Plaza shopping center on Farmington Avenue and a copy of the Alternative Signage Program Package, prepared by ArtFX, dated April 3, 2020.

David Webster, Federal Realty Investment Trust, 450 Artisan Way, Somerville, MA, on behalf of the applicant, explained they have submitted a current inventory of the signage for the Bristol Plaza shopping center on the north side of Farmington Avenue. This plaza has not been updated since 2011 when it was last approved. There is a new tenant, Five Below, going into the former Dress Barn space. When the applicant approached the City, it was suggested to update the signage package for the plaza. Mr. Webster had technical difficulties and was not able to be heard, but he could hear the Commission.

After inquiries by the Commission, Mr. Flanagan explained this was an update for the entire plaza. The sign for the Five Below was 70 ft. 11 inches, which was a percentage of the square footage for the store frontage. The signage would be different percentages throughout the entire plaza, but each store would have to fit within the envelope. There are towns having difficulty with this Regulation, but his opinion was this Regulation was clear and easy to comply with.

MOTION: Move to approve the Update of Alternative Signage Program at 597 Farmington Avenue (Bristol Plaza); Assessor’s Map 53, Lot 128B; BG (General Business) zone; Federal Realty Investment Trust, applicant, be approved as submitted.

By: Massarelli

Seconded: Marra.

For: Massarelli, Harlow, White, Marra and Provenzano.
Against: None.

Abstained: None.

The request is approved.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 8:40 P.M.

By: Masserelli

Seconded: Harlow.

For: Harlow, Marra, Provenzano, Massarelli and White.

Against: None.

Abstained: None.

This meeting was taped.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy King
Recording Secretary

Louise Provenzano., Chairman

David White, Secretary

DRAFT