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Debby Willis, Chairperson  
Angelia Christopher, Administrative Assistant

**PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, September 14, 2022 @ 6:00 PM  
City Council Chambers**

- 1. Call the Meeting to Order**-Chair Willis called the meeting to order at 6:04pm
- 2. Roll Call-Board Members**- Chair Debby Willis, Pam Mitchel, Lisa St. Hilaire, Shawn Dolley, Zachary Hanley, Adam Lemire, City Solicitor Jon Pottle, City Contract Planner Mark Eyerman, City Staff, Tracey Desjardins- EED, Kris McNeill- CEO, Angelia Christopher- Planning and Development Assistant. Applicant Paul Boghossian, Jim Coffin- Coffin Engineering, and Attorney Mark Bower. Members of the public- Jan Joyce, Robert Monniere, Phyllis Gardiner, Gordon Stevens, Mike gent, Karen Montell, Donald Brown.
- 3. Review of June 14, 2022 meeting minutes** – Pam Mitchel had a couple of corrections. Lisa St. Hilaire made a motion to approve the minutes with a couple corrections. Zachary Hanley seconded the motion. No further discussion. All in favor.
- 4. Planning Board Review and Approval** - Community Development Block Grant – Public Services Grant in the amount of \$50,000 for Boys and Girls Club. Lisa St. Hilaire asks what the grant will be used for. Tracey explained that this is to help cover supplies for programs that they have. Chair Willis asks if the board is ready to make a motion. Pam Mitchel moves that this request is approved. Lisa St. Hilaire seconded. No further discussion. All in favor.
- 5. Public Hearing: Gardiner Green**- Continuation of the August 25, 2022 meeting for the Final Subdivision & Continuation of Site Plan development Public Hearing at 150 Dresden Ave. City Tax map 032 Lots 023-023A in HDR. Lisa St. Hilaire recused herself from the Gardiner Green discussion.

**Subdivision performance standards**

The board agrees to come back to 14.6.1 after they are done reviewing the other requirements.

**14.6.2 General Lot requirements.** Pam Mitchel moves that the General Lot requirements standard is met. Shawn Dolley offers a second motion. No further discussion. All members present in favor.

**14.6.3 Monuments.** There will be a pin placed after the application is complete. Pam Mitchel moves that the monument requirement is met with the condition that the monument is placed at the unpinned location after approval. Zachary Hanley seconds the motion. No further discussion. All members present in favor.

#### **14.6.4 Water Supply**

There is a letter on file from the Superintendent of Gardiner Water, stating that the water supply is sufficient for this project. Pam Mitchel makes a motion that the water supply standard has been met. Zachary Hanley seconds the motion. No further discussion. All board members present in favor.

#### **14.6.5 Fire Protection**

There is a letter on file from the fire chief. Pam Mitchel moves that this standard is met. Shawn Dolley seconds the motion. No further discussion. All members present in favor.

#### **14.6.6 Sewer and Subsurface Wastewater Disposal Systems**

There is a letter from the superintendent. Pam Mitchel makes a motion that this standard has been met. Shawn Dolley seconds the motion. No further discussion. All board members present in favor.

**14.6.7 Financial and Technical Capacity** -Jim Coffin states that this is a difficult standard to meet prior to approval because contractors have not been selected yet and will not be until after approval. Once approval is achieved and a contractor is secured, the list of qualified professionals will be made available. Pam Mitchel makes a motion that 14.6.7 is satisfied with the previously mentioned conditions that the board set at the last meeting. Zachary Hanley second. No further discussion. Four members in favor and one opposed.

#### **14.6.9 Recreational Access Standards**

Pam Mitchel moves that this standard does not apply. Shawn Dolley seconded. No further discussion. Four members in favor- One opposed.

#### **14.6.10 Vehicular Access Adequacy**

A traffic study was done and Jim Coffin states that this property already has roads and driveways and this section seems to be geared more towards new subdivisions. Pam Mitchel moves that this standard does not apply because there are no streets within this subdivision. Zachary Hanley seconds. No further discussion. All members present in favor.

**14.6.1 Conformity with all local ordinances.** The Board agrees that they will hold off on voting on this right now.

**14.4.9** The proposed subdivision conforms to all the applicable standards and requirements of this Ordinance, the Comprehensive Plan, and other local ordinances. In making this determination, the Planning Board may interpret these ordinances and plans. Mr. Boghossian's attorney, Mark Bower states that this area has already been addressed by the board on 11/16/2021. This project is consistent with the Comp plan despite the opposing opinions of the community.

Pam Mitchel states that these units could contribute to the growth of the city. Shawn Dolley feels that he will abstain from voting on this article, because he needs to review the Comp Plan. Chair Willis would like more information on how the increased density will affect the neighborhood. Attorney Bower added that this project meets density requirements, and is not even close to going over that limit. The original number of units has decreased significantly therefore the impact is significantly less.

There are several abutters and neighbors to this project, here for the public hearing. Karen Montel, tells the board that she has lived in this neighborhood her whole life and she feels this project should not happen. She reports that there have always been traffic problems with that property. She feels that Mr. Boghossian is not invested in this neighborhood.

Gordon Stevens, another abutter, tells the board that he has lived in his home for 25+ years. When they first moved into their home, Merrill manor was open, and now look what it has turned into. He feels that this project is unreasonable, and that this neighborhood is already established and wonderful. The traffic on Dresden Ave is minimal and it is quiet. The neighbors all agree that this type of project does not belong on their street.

Debby there are two items that they have not voted on. The site plan public hearing has been continued. The board does not think they have an answer on the subdivision until they review the site plan. Debby does not want to do subdivision approval with a lot of conditions. The board decided that it was time to leave the subdivision where they have left off and start to review the Site Plan.

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**Site Plan Review.**

Mr. Coffin and Mr. Boghossian present any changes that have been made on the plan including explaining what materials will be used for the building. There is a rendering of what the building will look like coming down Dresden Ave. The Site Plan and Subdivision plans now match and should reflect correct info. The wood will be cypress and it will be horizontal. Adam Lemire asks what the material on the balconies is. Mr. Boghossian states that the railing is aluminum to match the windows. Kris McNeill CEO points out that the horizontal cable will not meet code, so it will have to be re configured. Several members of the public are expressing that this design is not sensitive to the character of the neighborhood. Attorney Bower- states that he has addressed this topic twice before, and that this project is sensitive to the character of the neighborhood. This project will integrate significant vegetative buffers, and will be a far less glaring use than the previous use. When it comes to existing structures, the goal is to improve what is already there, not change it to suit. Attorney Bower tells the board that the language of these standards is very vague and that he feels this applies to the construction of a new building. This is a renovation of an existing building which will include modifications, and alterations to improve the appearance.

Chair Willis opens the public hearing.

Lisa St. Hilaire- abutter to the project states that this plan looks better, but the word 'phases' is still present and needs to be removed. She asks Kris McNeill if there is asbestos and lead on the property and if so, how will it be remediated. She would like to know where all construction debris will be going, and where they will dispose of any hazardous materials. Kris McNeill states that one of the first permits that will be issued for this project is a demo permit which

specifically asks if hazardous materials are suspected. If asbestos is found, a contractor will have to be obtained for abatement.

Abutter Gordon Stevens asks about the walking path that is shown on the Site plan. Mr. Gordon would like to know if the proposed walking path is really 30' from their property line. Mr. Gordon wants information on whether there be a barrier to prevent the people from walking off the path and into the woods on their property. Jim Coffin states that he will go look to see how thick the vegetation is to see if something needs to be done.

Reconstruction – The abutters feel that this project is a reconstruction, however there will be minimal changes except for painting on the front side of the building. The biggest changes will be on the south side. According to plans, there will be more windows, and balconies on that side, but the front will look relatively similar to its current state.

When the façade of this building, and the other homes in the area are compared, it shows that this project is not consistent with the rest of the neighborhood. Abutting neighbors express concern about the other buildings that are on site and what will happen to them. Will they be slated for future development, torn down, or just sit there to fall into disrepair.

Kris McNeill explains that a Planning Board approval stands for 12 months from the final date of approval. If a building permit is not obtained before the end of that 12 months, the PB approval is no longer valid. A building permit is good for 2 years, but only if a substantial amount of the work has been completed in the first year. There are rules to this process that Mr. Boghossian will have to follow.

Abutting neighbor, Karen Montell, feels that the balconies are concerning. She doesn't feel that they will fit in, that they look like hotel balconies and she feels there is a risk of it looking like tenement homes. Balconies have a tendency to become storage spaces for items like barbeque grills and other outdoor items and she doesn't want that to happen at this property. Cheryl Clark, abutter states that she moved here in 2014, because she wanted to live in this neighborhood. She feels that the city is looking more at increasing tax revenue and the growth and not following Heart and Soul or the Comp Plan. She tells the board that she doesn't have confidence in Mr. Boghossian's character. She did not mind the hospital being there, but she does have concerns about that building being turned into 34- small- apartment units. She feels that the other buildings on the property will fall into blight until he gets the money to make more changes. This property would be best used to build starter homes, or even workforce housing. This project could divide the community.

Attorney Bower spoke on this application. This building is already part of this neighborhood, and has been for many, many years, so it already fits into the character. This building has been in this community for years, looking the way that it does. This proposal is to make the building look better and turn it into something useful.

Paul Boghossian would like to respond to some of the comments and questions. He explains that the balconies will fall under strict guidelines, but he is upset about the comment about the project turning into a tenement. He states that these units are being designed for working professionals. He has plans to use the other buildings for townhouses and condos in the future, and he cannot have unsavory people living in the main building.

Mr. Boghossian goes on to say that as far as the balconies and walking trail- that the board and the neighbors have asked for those items as part of the changes he had done.

He speaks of his project in Waterville, at the Hathaway mill and how successful that has been. That building now has over 600 people that live and work there now and when he started that process, the building was totally dilapidated. He states Tracey Desjardins was there, and she can report what the condition was. Mr. Boghossian feels that most of the residents of this city want this project, but the people on Dresden Ave cannot see past their opinions.

This building has been a part of the neighborhood for years and Mr. Boghossian wants to revitalize it.

The board agrees to adjourn for the evening and continue this application at another date. The Board set another meeting date to continue this application and public hearing. The next meeting will be held on 10/13/2022.

**5. Other Business-** No other business at this time.

**6. Adjourn-** Chair Willis asks for a motion to adjourn. Pam Mitchel made a motion to adjourn at 10:23pm. Lisa St. Hilaire seconded the motion. No further discussion. All in favor.