

**Planning Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2014**

ATTENDANCE: Pete Reich, Larry Souder, Paul Kurzer, Henry Barrett, Director of Planning & Zoning Mary Ann Skilling and Planning & Zoning Coordinator Dianna Battaglia.

Meeting called to Order at 6:36 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Without objection, the April 21, 2014 Planning & Zoning Meeting minutes were approved as written.

OLD BUSINESS:

FP2014-01 Final Site Plan – Perryville Elementary School renovations:

Mr. Brian Morgan with KCI Technologies, Inc., design and civil engineer for the project and overall site design for all of the zoning related matters and working as a sub-consultant with Studio J, the architectural firm responsible for designing and building placement. Our role, primarily, is to make sure we satisfy all the zoning requirements and provide storm water management, erosion and sediment control, landscape requirements which are part of the zoning and code. We are now at the final stages where they are very close to beginning construction. This is one of the last hurdles before they are eligible to apply for a building permit and start the process. School will be letting out shortly and as soon as the building is vacant they will want to move forward with the renovations. There have been no significant changes to the plans. We've had a couple of minor changes to storm water and after going through the LEED calculations, this building will be LEED Silver (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), and any State funding that is tied to a project has to receive LEED Silver at a minimum. We had some concerns with storm water so we did add a small core to the existing pond as recommended by the Department of Public Works during the review process. There has been a fair amount of refinement in the design and includes the wooden bridge that was required for pedestrian access to the middle school. There is a packed asphalt walkway connecting to the existing sidewalk to connect all the way up to the library on Coudon Boulevard, and it cuts across a little headwall structure on the existing storm water management facility. The plan is consistent with what you have seen before during previous reviews. The landscape plan has also been refined a bit with the buffer requirement addressed on the perimeter and we've also done more plantings for aesthetics along the front of the building and at the entrance way to make it more inviting. The landscape buffer is provided for buffering incompatible uses and the adjacent residential area. With the internal parking and then the road frontage and drive aisles there's really not a whole lot of plantable space, but have increased the amount of plantings to screen headlights from the parking area and also to provide a visual buffer from the parking.

Ms. Skilling indicated the adjoining properties are undeveloped with one existing residence on Cecil Avenue. The Board of Education was considering purchase of the properties but that did not happen.

Mr. Reich stated we had asked for road work to be done on Maywood and to consider paving all the way to Cecil Avenue.

Mr. Morgan responded there is a section of sidewalk along Maywood Avenue that we are looking to replace and the school is going to handle that independently, just past Cecil Avenue. The sidewalk is cracked where cars run across that side at that intersection and the school is going to voluntarily address that section of the sidewalk. The difficult situation we find ourselves in is at the State level and the funding that is allocated based upon actual enrollment and enrollment projections. It's a limited amount of funds to provide classroom space and improvements at the facility itself, so if you go much beyond that for the individual site costs, and I know school boards in multiple jurisdictions are constantly doing battle with the State in order to get site costs up a little bit, particularly in major renovation projects like this where State funding has become a significant issue. By the time you look at separating bus traffic with parent/student drop off area and separate that from vehicular space and with what we've done here to have the parent drop off isolated from the bus drop off and the service area is using a straight shot throughway, but the amount of site improvements that are required on a modern renovation are significant and the State budget hasn't caught up. Plantings have been added at the entrance and all around the courtyard area and along the foundation, to make it more inviting. In addition, raised planters will be located to act as a buffer and barrier between the entryway so no one could easily run up the sidewalk and also visually appealing. Regarding storm water, I have a notice we just received from Soil Conservation with their approval and we are ready to submit for final signature copies. We have preliminary approval and plans have been distributed for signature and we've been given authorization to submit those plans to the County for storm water.

Ms. Skilling indicated (Staff Report attached separate) most comments have been addressed by Mr. Morgan. One of the major things discussed at previous renovation meetings and most of this project is a renovation project, a structural project, basically we sign off on most of the things here, storm water and the plan but the County is responsible for any kind of code and actual construction. So we would just sign off for a Zoning Certificate and the County issues the building permit and final Use and Occupancy, with Town approval. They also have to get through the Board of Education process because they have criteria for schools. Also, I don't know if you are aware, this school will be closed during the renovation period and the students will be moved to two neighboring elementary schools, Bainbridge and Charlestown.

Mr. Morgan commented renovations can be done (with students in place), it wouldn't be the first time, but it's far from ideal, just the amount of disruption and the restrictions that would be placed on the contractor and the schedule, there would be difficulties and hurdles to be tackled. It's a much better process if it's unoccupied space.

Ms. Skilling stated another thing that was important to the Town was a connection to the library. It does go through some non-tidal wetlands there and across a stream that runs through there. They had to put a bridge across and adding a hard surface means more impervious area, all that had to be considered. As always, we have to have the storm water management plan finalized before we sign off. We'll do a landscape agreement but we won't need a Public Works Agreement. It's always been a cooperative agreement with the County to submit projects to the Town. They did a great job with storm water management, meeting all the new requirements with impervious areas, in a built up environment. There are some nice amenities on this site, the walking path and bio-retention areas that will be incorporated in educational components for the school.

Discussion continued regarding traffic impacts to the area. School enrollment should continue to remain consistent with no anticipated increase to the existing traffic. Renovations are needed to bring it up to date due to the age as the school has been here for some time, with a minor increase in the footprint and no planned increase to capacity.

Motion made by Mr. Souder and seconded by Mr. Barrett to approve the Final Site Plan as presented with conditions noted in Staff Report. **All in Favor. Motion Carried.**

Adjournment:

Without objection the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dianna M. Battaglia
Planning & Zoning Coordinator