

Torrington Development Corporation
Project Committee

Wednesday, January 5, 2011, 8:00 a.m.
TDC Office

Board of Directors Members Present: J. Baer, R. Bingham, P. Herbst, J. Lalonde, M. Maskovsky, M. McEachern, V. Muschell, G. Perosino.

Others in attendance: M. Connor, E. Fabbri, G. Fontanella (Milone & MacBroom), B. Baxter, S. Nocera, J. Scharnberg.

Quorum present.

8:01 a.m. Meeting called to order by P. Herbst.

P. Herbst reviewed status of project to date, approvals issued to date and pending applications for approval. Public hearing is scheduled for January 12, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. for preliminary site plan approval. The preliminary site plan to be considered by P&Z incorporates the results of numerous conversations that took place with the Warner Theater regarding the area behind their property, including a loading dock at the same level as the stage, places for large event vehicles to unload and park and the circular area that improves traffic circulation. This circular area is adjacent to and shares access to the extension of City Hall Avenue with the existing City owned parking lot adjacent to City Hall Avenue. P. Herbst spoke to representatives of the Warner Theater yesterday. The Warner noted their primary concerns involved safety and they are very comfortable with what has been agreed to as represented in the current preliminary design. Herbst noted that it was not perfect but an acceptable compromise.

G. Fontanella reviewed the comments Ed Fabbri submitted outlining his concerns with the preliminary design.

Comment 1: Existing City parking lot configuration -29 spaces. E. Fabbri sketched out an idea that would provide for 37 spaces by maintaining the existing lot configuration which provides for a dead-end situation at the back of the parking lot. M&M's original design provided 25 spaces and was revised to provide 30. A general discussion followed regarding dead-end parking compared to what has been designed with a circular area providing better traffic flow through the lot. E. Fabbri reviewed current usage of the space and the current turnover rate and emphasized that the City cannot afford to lose spaces in that area. G. Fontanella noted that the dead-end concept was not an acceptable design and noted that the current design complies with best design practices and ADA compliance and has a difference of opinion on the turnover rate. The Warner specifically liked the turn-around area and safety is their primary concern. The dead-end design would aggravate traffic problems given the number of cars likely to be stuck and having to execute k-turns. The revised 30 spaces (MMI design) is a net reduction of 7 spaces per Ed's design in that area. Existing spaces on City Hall Avenue- 11, with 24 available with the current design. Gary and Ed discussed loss of spaces in various areas of the plan – biggest loss of space affects the Warner and their operation which contributed to the high level of

activity and discussion between Warner and M&M. It was noted that the final result of these discussions with Warner was that they were okay with the losses as currently designed. Mayor commented that there will be a big public perception issue re loss of spaces – Vic commented that was going to be the case from the start and that off-street parking available adjacent to the project area was always thought to be available to support properties and uses within the Phase 1 area – i.e. picking up spaces in the library parking lot – Greg noted work is being done by parking commission to ensure there is other parking picked up. Vic noted that in the area now before the P&Z has always been contemplated to see a loss of spaces – S. Nocera re-emphasized the public perception issue. Peter mentioned the study underway re Temkin’s spaces including a pedestrian bridge from library parking which is very underutilized.

2. Gary reviewed the new city hall parking and existing cemetery access – with the revised plans further defining the entrance to City Hall and the cemetery some parking (2 spaces) that presently exists in front of the cemetery will be loss .

3. Gary – orig. design had sidewalk only on east side – nothing on west side – Ed suggested removing sidewalk and shifting the road to match the future realignment of Center Street – M&M incorporated parking on west side but also believes it is needed on east side as a positive pedestrian safe zone and argued to keep the sidewalk – City Hall Ave will have sidewalks along east and west sides.

4. & 5. Ed comments read – Gary replied – opening opposite St John place is appropriate , likely that the area back there will be shut off to the public during events. Peter noted that Warner had their own engineer working with TDC while reviewing these plans. Ed noted that shifting the entrance northerly doesn’t work w/proposed grading – i.e. road will have to drop in addition to the entrance to Warner, so the parking lot will not be level with shifting the entrance up closer to City Hall. Having Warner keep a flatter lot v. aligning opposite St. John place or by disconnecting St John Place and changing the parking entrance to church was discussed. Gary said it this comment ties in to comment #5 on his document. Discussed terminating St. Johns place v. access to City Hall Ave – M&M has looked at all those options including in conjunction w/ meeting with the church. Gary believes grading can be managed as designed currently by slight revisions in Final Design and work w/circulation having access point across St John Place. Ed concerned that Warner doesn’t specifically know that grading will change and that their lot will not be level. Marty suggested that Gary, Ed and Chuck Brower to meet to articulate Ed’s concerns and get something in writing from Warner. Vic and Peter concerned it will take too much time and presents a modification that could be addressed in Final Design if required. Vic asked if design is approved as a site plan and issue is whether it will work better for Warner vs. how it works on the plan – does that affect approval of the site plan? What is the issue? Chuck will be attending public hearing– he will speak in support per Peter given the 8 mos. they have worked on it – reaching consensus was difficult and Chuck supports the current plan – site plan modification can be done in future. Muff noted he was here in support of the Warner and Chuck’s position. Vic mentioned meeting w/Bill and church – they understand St. Johns Place will remain open and have an entrance only off E. Main but exit out on St. Johns Place to City Hall Avenue extension. Greg commented that he liked the design in terms of traffic flow and if Warner has approved this understanding that they have lost some spaces to gain better traffic management and safety – then 4 and 5 are covered.

6. Prelim. Design does show lighting – Gary will include the specifics of the fixtures to match all others at Marty's request.

7. Discussion of previous paving presents maintenance problems per Ed. Gary said they still see no problem with the pavement and noted a study by the U of New Hampshire having used it successfully – public works doesn't want it on the streets per Ed where you have the bigger trucks working – ok w/it in parking lots where you use smaller trucks. Per Gary, studies show that it will hold up to the big trucks – in final design there will be more info and details available but will send info on to Ed from New Hampshire. Steve N. likes it as a nice detail – but cost question – committee might get finite amount of money; suggestion to submit it as a design alternate to give some flexibility. Gary noted that it is more expensive – Jack noted that there may be other sources of funding for this alternative since it is low impact design. Marty would prefer approval as presented and modification later if too expensive. Jack asked if O&G was contacted to discuss use of porous pavement since they have a lot of experience. Gary said he would contact O&G between now and public hearing.

Center Cemetery comment:– requested a fencing to replicate existing – not a problem for M&M and a note will be added to plan, indicating installation of a fence.

Fire Dept comments – as it relates to P&Z area – no comments.

Police traffic asked to refocus on P&Z area – revised comments rec'd – Gary noted 2: signage and pavement markings in compliance with MUTCD, be added to design in a note in the plans per Gary. 2. Shope wants to see whether spaces are metered, kiosk, etc. however parking committee working on plan-- once it is done it will be put in plan, will request site plan modification as that gets completed.

Public hearing scope of discussion – three areas outlined in Marty's letter to fire/police

#2 on agenda per Marty –

Ed sticks by his comments on St. Johns place grading. As for intersection, likes improvements – Asst. City Engineer still reviewing plans – Gary should meet w/Matt Walsh – noted that many comments are not appropriate for P&Z hearing; this is not a final design. Gary still suggests submission of his final comments – there will still be a more formal prelim design review and comments incorporated or reviewed to get to final design. Marty pointed out that this will be a new city street and Ed will have to sign off. Gary pointed out that this is not a final design and said Ed should submit his comments so that P&Z can consider which ones are appropriate to be incorporated in final plan. Ed noted that they are reacting like it is a DOT project – Gary noted that prelim design process intended to be very complete but with room to incorporate comments/conditions, etc. Marty still has some concerns whether the debate that happened this a.m. will happen at P&Z meeting. Jeff pointed out that there are 3 engineers' opinions on what will work. Mayor noted that it is more what P&Z asks for in terms of conditions for their approval that will be worked out for final design. Mayor noted that even w/in the city there will be different opinions but is it better than what we have now, and the answer is yes. Commission is supposed to review if it meets regulations then will approve. Difference is that public hearing is normally required only for special exceptions, but difference here is this Pub. Hearing is for preliminary

site plan approval – first one ever per Marty in his 11 years for a preliminary site plan approval- and was scheduled in the interest of the public to provide an opportunity for input. Marty suggested a condition – before starting work on project, MMI will address comments City engineering dept has? Board answer is yes – likely to be modifications depending on level of activity and passage of time – Peter noted importance of Marty setting the boundaries of what will be discussed

Motion by Vic for committee to approved the plan as modified by M&M, 2nd Jack, Approved

Greg moved, 2nd Ryan, Adj. 9:05 a.m.

Motion by R. Bingham to adjourn. 2nd by V. Muschell. Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:23 a.m.