

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD AT 97 MOHAWK STREET
COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS
APRIL 10, 2023 at 6:00PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Mr. John Carroll, Chair**
 Mr. Joe Moloughney, Vice Chair
 Mr. Joe Nadeau
 Ms. Stephanie Couture
 Ms. Kizzy Williams (arrived 6:10PM)

ABSENT: **None**

ALSO PRESENT: **Joseph Seman-Graves City Planner**
 Sharon Butler, Administrative Assistant
 Tess Drauschak, Assistant Planner

Chairperson Carroll called the April Planning Board meeting to order at 6:00 pm and asked for roll call. Roll Call; Member Williams arrived at 6:10PM.

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 13, 2023 MEETING

Chair Carroll; first on the agenda is the meeting minutes from the March 13th meeting, are there any corrections, changes, being none he asked for a motion to accept the minutes as printed.
Motion to accept the minutes was made by Member Couture 2nd by Member Nadeau motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
John Carroll	X	
Joe Nadeau	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	
Joe Moloughney	X	

CONSIDERATION OF A CHANGE OF USE/NEW TENANT APPLICATION FOR 227 REMSEN STREET

Chairperson Carroll; next on the agenda is 227 Remsen Street Melissa Riddle are you here:
Ms. Melissa Riddle approached the board stating they own the building (the business owns the building) that the insurance business used to be in that building and they were looking to bring it back to the same location.
Chair Carroll all we are doing is change of tenant and change of use. Do you have any plans to do work on the front of the place?
Ms. Riddle yes, we had our contractor put in the paperwork for that already
Chair Carroll; ok. How much foot traffic do you expect to come in? Just so, about parking.
Ms. Riddle; give or take depending on the day maybe 10 or 15 a day, but not all at the same time, it would be sporadic
Chair Carroll; ok, any questions from the board
Vice Chair Moloughney; no questions it seems pretty easy
Member Couture asked about plans being submitted so they knew what the store front would look like.
Joe Seman-Graves stated that they would be at this month's historic board meeting.
Chair Carroll; do I hear a motion?
Member Nadeau made a motion to approve the application 2nd by Vice Chair Moloughney motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
John Carroll	X	
Joe Nadeau	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	ABSENT	
Joe Moloughney	X	

CONSIDERATION OF A SITE PLAN APPROVAL FOR 9 LAURA DRIVE

Chairperson Carroll next on the agenda is Laura Drive 2 properties on Laura Drive. Chairperson Carroll addressed the audience stating that when they come up to speak they are to give their name, address and considerations and they are to address the board. He then had the applicant approach Mr. Fred Sharifipour and asked for an update.

Mr. Sharifipour; we have a proposal to convert the current convent and school to a 3 unit, 9A and a 9 unit in 9B, there's a site plan from Advanced Engineering, we don't need any zoning variances

Chairperson Carroll; if approved when would you start construction or renovations?

Mr. Sharifipour; we still need Attorney General approvals which should be approximately 30 to 60 days and then we would start right away. We already have site plan submitted and the engineer has worked hard to get everything over to you guys. I think it is a great proposal for the site. We have added a bunch of landscaping, amenities for kids, bike racks and there is more than sufficient parking. We actually took the parking that is there now and made it a little smaller. Other than that it is going to remain pretty much the same.

Chairperson Carroll; there's going to be off-street parking for all the tenants?

Mr. Sharifipour; on property parking, no on street parking. There will be no street parking.

Chairperson Carroll; how many 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom?

Mr. Sharifipour; the 3 unit is a 2-2 bedroom and 1-- 3 bedroom, what we didn't want to do is make micro apartments, they're pretty good size. For the 9 unit the layout of the rooms is already there it will be 7—1 bedroom and 1—2 bedroom and a loft that will be 3 bedroom where the gymnasium is now.

Chairperson Carroll; ok are any improvements planned for Laura Drive itself as part of the project?

Mr. Sharifipour there really isn't any room for any improvements there other than beautifying the large parcels that are there, we're adding curbs, landscaping details, right now it's a little disorganized but were going to have dedicated parking, dedicated area for electric cars and handicap spots, more than what is required.

Chairperson Carroll; in the course of a day how many comings and goings do you expect?

Mr. Sharifipour in the course of a day, we have I think it's times and a half for a 3 unit it would be 5 in and out and for the 9 it would be 15, but I can't recall the exact number

Chairperson Carroll so that's 24 cars a day.

Mr. Sharifipour roughly yes. The street can definitely handle it because this was actually 16 individual residential lots, so when this whole island was developed you can see there is actually 16 individual home lots.

Chairperson Carroll and that is what is denoted here?

Mr. Sharifipour yes, actually 16 residential lots, so this is more than sufficient to support it. I think what we are proposing to be there now is going to be the least amount of traffic.

Chairperson Carroll how long has the school been there?

Mr. Sharifipour it was originally built from my understanding the convent was built in 1950's and then I believe where the 3 unit is going to be, was an addition built in 1972 or somewhere. So the school was originally built then the convent was an addition.

Chairperson Carroll how long has it been abandoned?

Mr. Sharifipour my understanding is it hasn't been abandoned all the utilities are still on, everything is in working order, the water is still on.

Chairperson Carroll lets call it vacant then, how long has it been vacant?

Mr. Sharifipour; we didn't get an exact number from the church; we were told that the utilities are still on and upon our inspection found there is still furniture in there.

Chairperson Carroll; board members any questions?

Member Nadeau; asked the applicant if they expected to clean up the area of Pulaski the wooded area?

Mr. Sharifipour so the wooded area we originally wanted to do but then the engineer said they might want to keep the trees there for privacy between the residential, us and the neighbors.

Member Nadeau I'm not suggesting taking trees down, I'm talking grooming it

Mr. Sharifipour yes we are looking at grooming it and bringing in top soil

Chairperson Carroll even on the hillside?

Mr. Sharifipour yes even on the hillside, everything

Member Nadeau; I understand that there is a concern about the width of Laura Drive, has that been rectified Joe?

Joe Seman-Graves; Paul Johnson the traffic commissioner sent in a comment that he believes it would have to be looked at to be either a two way or it would have to be a one way. I know it is currently used as a one way but it is not assigned as a one way, that would be a conversation the planning board has with the traffic commission on widening or making it a one way.

Chairperson Carroll they will make the ultimate decision?

Joe Seman-Graves especially for one way, widening would involve, even though the City right of way is used for parking, so it would be a conversation with the neighboring property owners as well.

Member Nadeau; so what does that decide?

Joe Seman-Graves I think it's a conversation that starts now

Member Nadeau; is the contractor on the hook for widening the road or is the City, if it is deemed to be widened? And is there enough driveway to widen it?

Joe Seman-Graves; so it is a little bit of both, the contractor can certainly, if there is an agreement between the planning board and the contractor, it can also be incorporated into any plans the city has through the common council.

Member Nadeau; if the city deemed it one way, then we want input from the residents right?

Joe Seman-Graves typically when the traffic commission turns something one way, they are asked to come to a traffic commission meeting

Member Nadeau so that is something more to talk about and if that's the case we wouldn't be approving or disapproving.

Joe Seman-Graves you don't have to make a decision today

Vice Chair Moloughney; question as far as the buildings as they exist, what is the square footage of the building, roughly

Mr. Sharifipour square footage is one is about 7200 sq. ft the other is about 3,300

Vice Chair Moloughney; there's 23 but that is the footprint, I'm thinking 2 stories

Mr. Sharifipour it's one story

Vice Chair Moloughney I'm thinking the unit sizes..

Mr. Sharifipour the unit sizes are quite large

There was a question regarding the sizes of the units, Tess read the memo that was in the packets regarding the various sizes of the units.

Mr. Sharifipour again stated that they were not looking to do micro apartments but making the apartments more sizeable for comfort of tenants

Vice Chair Moloughney this is reasonably using the available space versus trying to cram as many people as we can fit into there, 1,000 to 1,600 sq. ft. spaces are sizeable apartments.

Chairperson Carroll asked if they are going to be market rate apartments

Mr. Sharifipour; the market is changing so much we're just going to go with whatever the market rate is at the time they are ready

Member Couture asked about the property management plan if they were going to be onsite

Mr. Sharifipour the property management company is his wife's company and the office is in Latham, which will be available

Member Couture is that for tenants to reach out to as well as neighbors with any concerns

Mr. Sharifipour everybody

Member Couture then asked for administrative purposes can we have documents consistently say convent versus rectory for clarification just so we know which space. As far as traffic that was brought up, and traffic generated that's 5 trips (inaudible) and she then asked about the lighting plan

Mr. Sharifipour stated that the lighting plan should be in the documents that they have.

There was then a discussion regarding the lighting and where they're placed on the property and the illumination of them. Mr. Sharifipour stated that he wanted to do minimum lighting so as not to disturb anyone. The engineer figured out the calculations.

Member Couture then asked if there would be cameras on the property.

Mr. Sharifipour stated that they'd like to but it depends on the insurance and what they require.

Vice Chair Moloughney asked about the northern end of the property at Pulaski there is a narrow driveway coming into the property and asked if they thought about incorporating that, it's not on the parcel but a City ROW, alley was that ever discussed with the City.

Mr. Sharifipour is that the one in the back? It actually doesn't work it's very steep and it is a safety concern at this point.

Chairperson Carroll asked if there were any more questions from the board.

Member Nadeau stated that the road issue needs to be resolved before they vote.

Mr. Sharifipour stated that they are on a time constraint and asked if there could be a contingency regarding the road.

The road that is there currently has been there, and can make it a one way or whatever it is, we have no problem upgrading or making it safe and making sure the traffic is rectified. We can discuss the road with our engineers and do whatever we have to. We do have enough footage to make a two-way street it shows 25 foot from property line to property line, we don't have a problem working with the city to make it happen. I don't know if the homes across the street will be ok with that because they won't be able to park there.

Chairperson Carroll that would be my concern too because historically they park there.

Mr. Sharifipour widening would be in that direction, and cars parked there now wouldn't be able to do that if we widen the road. We are willing to work with the City and the neighbors to figure it out. We are adding curbing to our parking lot and landscaping so it is more defined.

Chairperson Carroll asked if they were adding curbing to the frontage on Laura Drive

Mr. Sharifipour we are adding new sidewalks there and curbing

Member Nadeau that is in front of the building

Mr. Sharifipour yes, it is a little undefined right now

Chairperson Carroll any more questions from the board.

Member Nadeau not right now, but whatever the City engineer recommends to rectify the street issue

Chairperson Carroll opened it to public comments;

Mr. John Hawron 28 Kosciusko; commented about the 2-lane road, there are 3 garages back there that wouldn't be able to be used any longer. He also had concerns about water going into the garages.

Vice Chair Moloughney clarified that the garages they are the rear entry off of Laura they are right on the property line

Mr. Hawron correct

Chairperson Carroll if it was one way you would have plenty of room to pull in and out of there and still be able to park as they have been.

Mr. John DiCocco 30 Kosciusko; had the same concerns with the garages and parking. He also stated it is mixed-use but it is residential that is 6 blocks long, they said that there are enough lots there to do 25 houses but it is only 6 blocks long on the other side of Kosciusko. We are not on top of each other there are lots in between. Dropping 24 cars, it's hard enough to get off the island now.

There was a discussion regarding the parking

Member Couture the applicant did say that the property management would be available for citizens to contact if there are issues.

Mr. DiCocco also brought up privacy issues while using their pool, and sewer overflows.

Vice Chair Moloughney stated that the municipal infrastructure has been looked at by the engineer

Joe Seman-Graves stated that engineer Garry Nathan had no comments on the site plan

There was then a discussion regarding the project at Golden Krust which Joe explained to Mr. DiCocco and the difference in the projects.

Vice Chair Moloughney to say it is going to kill the community, what alternative use other than the building being vacant and decaying and being demolished

Mr. DiCocco stated that there used to be an adult care center there they would be there during the day and at night gone something that is not there 24 hours a day

Vice Chair Moloughney responded that we don't own the property so we can't

Mr. DiCocco I know they used to use it for police training, and police dogs, firemen training

Chairperson Carroll or it can decay

Mr. DiCocco or knock it down and make it a park

Chairperson Carroll there is no profit margin to knock it down. Anyone else want to speak?

Ms. Marie Filak address unknown; brought up the number of units and bedrooms, and the number of people to occupy each unit legally. She also brought up the dog park and the playground asking where they would be located

Chairperson Carroll stated that it would be on the north end of the building by the parking lot in the common alley by the firehouse.

Ms. Filak asked if they would be fenced in and if there would be an electronic gate

Chairperson Carroll said it would be a regular fence regular gate.

Ms. Filak then asked about the playground. She then asked about who was going to control who is going in and out of the dog park and the playground. She then asked about the street and it being widened.

Chairperson Carroll clarified that there is a 25-foot city right of way encompassing Laura drive and there are no plans to widen it one way or another. We would have to look at engineering plans at the time.

Joe Seman-Graves explained the process

Ms. Filak asked what the speed limit would be on the road

Joe Seman-Graves it would be up to the traffic commission

Vice Chair Moloughney; Joe absent any posting the city speed limit is 30 correct?

Joe Seman-Graves yes

Ms. Filak asked who would be maintaining the park

Chairperson Carroll responded that the property owner would be maintaining the property.

Mr. Filak again brought up the traffic concerns

Chairperson Carroll asked if anyone else had any comments

Mr. John Wojcik 1 2nd Street. Asked where the main entrance to the development was going to be, and then asked if the entrance could be on Pulaski so as not to bother the people.

Joe Seman-Graves explained to Mr. Wojcik where the entrance would be off Laura Drive, the proposed sidewalks

Mr. Wojcik asked about making the entrance on Pulaski and the alternative routes to get into the development

He then asked how many units would be for low-income people.

Chairperson Carroll stated that the applicant is waiting to see what the market dictates, but they will be market rate apartments.

Mr. Wojcik then asked for clarification on the number of units and a breakdown of the units. Tess explained the units, number of bedrooms and the square footage

Mr. Wojcik then expressed concerns about the sewer line and where it would be tied in, he asked where the tie in would be.

Joe Seman-Graves stated that the tie in is not on what they have but will be on the final drawings to be reviewed by the engineer but the engineer did say water and sewer were not a concern.

Mr. Wojcik had a comment about the existing heating and he didn't think it was sufficient for the residents

Chairperson Carroll asked if there was anyone else wanting to make any comments

Mr. Paul Thouin 38-39 Kosciusko Avenue expressed concerns about the traffic, curbing and sidewalks and the properties diminishing, where the snow and water would be going –it would go to the lower part of the road.

Chairperson Carroll anyone else? Being no other public comments, the public comment section was closed. He then stated that it is 2 properties but it would be addressed as one for approval purposes. Do I have a motion and any contingencies

Vice Chair Moloughney I still think we need to talk about the road and I'd like to, there are comments, the applicant talked about using that existing driveway that comes up off of Pulaski even if that were an entrance driveway so you could come up Pulaski up that hill into the parking lot would short circuit some of the traffic moving all the way down and around. It would give another option; you can't make people use it but the larger of the two facilities is located on that parcel with the larger parking lot right there. The 3 unit is less affected, to the extent that is feasible I would like to continue the conversation about that. It's on the city alley so there may be a discussion with the traffic commission on

what we have to do, I think it is still worth exploring and if some grade adjustment has to be done to it what does that entail?

Chairperson Carroll it would have to be referred to the engineer to see what kind of traffic flow and what options you would have. So we'll have the engineer look at the traffic flow on Pulaski, Laura, Kosciusko, and the common alley here. Joe Seman-Graves there was a traffic study done in 2019.

Vice Chair Moloughney; Joe in terms of Laura Drive would we be making a recommendation to the traffic commission. Would they be looking to us to have that discussion? I don't think anybody, as least I haven't heard anyone wants a two-way street and widening the pavement so I think there is a legitimate discussion for a one way, I would advocate that would be part of the recommendation we make.

Chairperson Carroll and the public would be part of what direction they would like the traffic to go in also Vice Chair Moloughney yes at the traffic commission meeting that would also be subject to public comment

Chairperson Carroll ok....

Vice Chair Moloughney I would say lastly that as we proceed I would like to see this move forward it's a vacant property and it is underutilized in the city and the next developer could come in and want to make it a 25 unit instead of the 12 that are under discussion right now. Part of this, what our jobs are is to balance all of the needs and to me this is not an inappropriate or grossly overdeveloped use of the site.

Member Nadeau it saves the building and puts it back on the tax rolls

Chairperson Carroll so we are looking for a motion to accept the site plan with a recommendation to have the city engineer do a traffic study around there to find the best flow of traffic.

Member Couture that would include the one way and the possible entry on Pulaski

Vice Chair Moloughney improving that exiting driveway

Chairperson Carroll do I hear a motion?

Member Williams made a motion to accept with the recommendations stated 2nd by Member Nadeau motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
John Carroll	X	
Joe Nadeau	X	
Stephanie Couture	X	
Kizzy Williams	X	
Joe Moloughney	X	

Chairperson Carroll then asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting in order to move on to the public meeting regarding the Remsen Street Fire sites.

Adjournment;

Motion to adjourn by Member Nadeau 2nd by Member Couture, meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Submitted by:

Sharon Butler

Secretary