

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD AT 97 MOHAWK STREET
COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS
OCTOBER 2, 2023 at 6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Mr. Jack Carroll, Chair**
 Mr. Joe Moloughney, Vice Chair
 Mr. Joe Nadeau
 Mr. Joe McCormick
 Mr. Tony D’Angelico

ABSENT: **None**

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

Chair Carroll called the Planning Board meeting of October 2nd to order at 6:30 pm and asked for roll call.
Roll Call; no members absent

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING

Chair Carroll; first order of business is the meeting minutes from the September 11th meeting, do I have a motion to approve the minutes?
Motion to accept the minutes was made by Member D’Angelico 2nd by Member Nadeau motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member Nadeau	X	
Member McCormick	X	
Member D’Angelico	X	

CONSIDERATION OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR 105 HUDSON AVENUE

Chair Carroll; who’s here about 105 Hudson Avenue?
Joe Seman-Graves; the applicant is not here
Chair Carroll; ok so we will put it aside to see if they show up. We will move on to Niver Street.

CONSIDERATION OF A SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR A CURB CUT AT 35 NIVER STREET

Chair Carroll; next is a curb cut on Cohoes Boulevard do we have anyone here to speak on that? We will move that to see if someone shows up.

DISCUSSION OF A PROPOSAL FOR 50 DELAWARE AVENUE

Chair Carroll; Next item, 50 Delaware Avenue, do we have anyone for 50 Delaware Avenue here?
Ms. Caryn Mlodzianowski representing Bohler Engineering approached the board, we are here to introduce a potential project at 50 Delaware Avenue it is currently a vacant parcel with give or take 3.6 acres of land in the MU-2 zoning district along the river. We are proposing a mixed-use development project on the property. As you can see on the sketch plan (visual for the board members) we are at the point to introduce things and get some feedback. Generally the proposal is 28,000 square feet and 4 stories for the mixed-use project. So the building is slated up and down Delaware Avenue in a U shape as you can see—one single building with a center court yard area outside for outdoor amenities and parking on either side. So the site would be accessed, 2 different access points on either side with the parking area on the side of the building for each and leaving as much area as possible along the river to preserve that setting that is there. We are also

proposing an amenity area that can be used by pedestrians and out door activities because that would also be able to handle emergency access vehicles as well. The footprint still has to be worked out so it maybe in the ballpark of maybe 100 units but again that this is very sketch plan conceptual as we work forward on the footprint those details will be defined, the intent is a portion of the first floor to be commercial area as part of that mixed use component. We did also provide example architecture of the project is that it will have a more contemporary look again it will present itself in that commercial portion on the first floor with varying treatments and things like that. So with that I will turn it over to the board, thank you.

Chair Carroll; on the commercial are you thinking offices or restaurants?

Ms. Mlodzianowski; that all still has to be worked out but we may use the space as a gym or maybe office type space as well.

Member Nadeau; are you saying you are kind of restricted to office? Would you encourage restaurant or store?

Ms. Mlodzianowski; they could think about it, but they are more targeting along the lines of a gym

Member Nadeau; ok, this show parking in front of the stores is that true?

Ms. Mlodzianowski; the architecture?

Member Nadeau; yes

Ms. Mlodzianowski; that was just to look at the building

Member Nadeau; so there is no parking. And you said a portion of the first floor would be commercial would that be frontage on Delaware Avenue?

Ms. Mlodzianowski; that still has to be worked out.

Member Nadeau; well this is very, very preliminary so the amount of questions to ask is minimal

Vice Chair Moloughney; I think feed back is kind of, knowing exactly the conversation that is going to take place with the Island folks when they come out, traffic, width of Delaware Avenue especially with retail/commercial that sort of thing going on it, it (inaudible) depends on the parking requirements too, with a gym with peak hours and peak parking, residents, it is balancing how much parking you have and open space and how it's all going, but certainly the Delaware corridor is going to be the first conversation. You've seen that right? It's tight, it's narrow there's been a lot of development down there and the road hasn't kept up with the demands, that's the argument you are going to hear.

Ms. Mlodzianowski; is it the road specifically or the design of the road?

Chair Carroll; its more the volume of traffic on the road, it is exceeding the ability of the road to handle it.

Vice Chair Moloughney; yes, it is still, it hasn't been improved, it hasn't been widened and it is relatively narrow and the cumulative uses that are on there the last 15 years.

Chair Carroll; now when you say gym, is it going to be a commercial open gym or is it going to be a gym for the residents.

Tony Casel; it will be for the residents and more towards personal training than an actual commercial gym

Vice Chair Moloughney; I guess the other piece is just a portion of the first floor what is that? In my mind it should be meaningful in terms of a true mixed use on the waterfront. And not like we cut out 500 square feet in the corner and now it's mixed use.

Member Nadeau; are you suggesting that those things are going to be helpful to people on the Island? The Island folks are adamant about apartments.

Mr. Casel; told the board that they are targeting professionals with one- and two-bedroom apartments, they are not looking for families to occupy. The bedrooms will be limited to two bedroom.

Chair Carroll; have you given any thought to how many one bedroom or two bedroom there will be?

Mr. Casel; if there is 100 units it will probably be 66 to 34 or 70 to 30. It will be more one bedroom because business wise you get more per square foot.

Chair Carroll; you get more apartments in there as well.

Mr. Casel; we are looking at age group 20' to 40-year age, people coming out of RPI

Vice Chair Moloughney; I'm just looking at the waterfront trail, there's a small segment of the overall zoning plan and the planning of this corridor for a continuous waterfront trail through all of these connected properties, there is another one down the street that came in recently and we were talking about adding that amenity because it was a much older project and I think there one question with the City and the City Engineer whoever parks, some consistency of what that trail

looks like, there's pavers here and asphalt there and then it is just a patch work, in the end it is just not, in the end we'd want something more consistent for each of the properties. I would recommend talking to the City.

Ms. Mlodzianowski; ok

Chair Carroll; anything else gentlemen? Ok

Ms. Mlodzianowski; to move forward we will do a more complete submittal, do a survey, an engineered site plan and things like that.

Vice Chair Moloughney; one other thing that comes to be is land coverage percentages, I think back to what to expect from the neighborhood, nobody is going to like a 4-story apartment building, one that goes property line to property line with river views for everybody and you build that out, that is different than what I see here where you have 2 ground level parking areas with views to the river being maintained. Certainly something worth considering. What I'm looking at as a planning board member is how the building fits the property and the context of the area.

Chair Carroll; anybody else?

Ms. Mlodzianowski; are there specific items that we can come back with that would make it less difficult?

Chair Carroll; I'm good. Conceptually it seems to fit, I'm sure as you go forward with the process there will be more questions.

Member Nadeau; just a question, will they go to Zoning first?

Joe Seman-Graves; anything over 10 units will have to go to the Zoning Board.

Ms. Mlodzianowski; I'm going to assume that the place next door went through the same process.

Joe Seman-Graves; I have to look, one was from 2005 and the other was 2016, so I have to look and see what the zoning was then.

Ms. Mlodzianowski; looking at the use it seems that area is targeted for multi-family use.

Member Nadeau; seeing that Joe said anything over 10 units need Zoning approval, would it behoove them to get approval from the Zoning board instead of spending more money on design?

Joe Seman-Graves; it is up to the applicant.

Chair Carroll; thank you.

CONSIDERATION OF A SITE PLAN REVIEW FOR A CURB CUT AT 35 NIVER STREET

Chair Carroll; we have the developer for 35 Niver Street

Mr. Brian Sipperly Verity Engineering approached the board. We represent the applicant Hudson River Community Credit Union with their branch at 35 Niver Street. So the proposal in front of the board tonight is a curb cut into the parking lot into the bank branch. Very simple proposed project, generally speaking most of the improvements are within the State's right of way, in terms of access driveway, grading that is going to take place, the surface in the back. The proposal is to have minimal disturbance on the sight itself, minimal vegetation clearing, installation of a culvert, installation of a sign that will be effective, that is the entire scope of the work. For the board's education this has been a process for a number of years with the NYS Department of Transportation. We just recently got the conveyance of the property. There are no moving of lot lines all it does is if were to take a (inaudible) course on the property line it fits 50 feet of that property line will convert without access to right of way. The State does not allow curb cuts along property lines where we have our improvements we have to fit it within that 50 feet. Pretty simple project, at point I will turn it over to the board if you have any questions.

Chair Carroll; you have all of your DOT permits and stuff for the curb cutting?

Mr. Sipperly; we will, in order for us to get the conveyance and access we had to do a lot of technical work, drainage, traffic study. It's already been reviewed by the office, it's all lined up it is just we need this in order to move ahead. We have provided to the City the correspondence with scheduling. We will then get the building permit through the City. There will be no lane closures, just shoulder closure I believe that is shown in the full plans on records.

Member Nadeau; my main concern is safety. This is the first curb cut on 787—pulling out of the site, if someone is speeding on that road something is going to happen. There is a lot of speeding on that road and that is my concern.

Member McCormick; that is my concern also, not so much the ingress but the egress

Mr. Sipperly; they are all valid concerns, they have been reviewed by the engineers at DOT, I would also say it is no different than any other intersection you have that has curb cuts. Very valid points but not something new.

Member Nadeau; ideally the more the merrier, but with it being the first one I think there should be some precautions, whether it is signage or something, initially for the first year or so.

Mr. Sipperly; we weren't allowed to put signage there, it's a state highway, what do you suggest?

Member Nadeau; I'm just opening up the conversation.

Mr. Sipperly; the challenge here is when you are driving by this section of the road, your eye isn't going to go to the right predominantly, and it is set back quite a ways.

Member Nadeau; looking down the road if there is going to be more of these, then it is going

Chair Carroll; where this curb cut is going, where the entrance way is going there is a focal point anyway, because the Pig Pit is a focal point and you can see that, then in front of you is going to be ingress and egress for the bank.

Member McCormick; it the intent to have people go into the back and then exit onto there?

Mr. Sipperly; explained the traffic study and how the pattern would work going in and out of the bank

Member McCormick; what is the disadvantage of people using the current pattern

Mr. Sipperly; there was no disadvantage, clearly all traffic heading that way would take a right at the light.

Vice Chair Moloughney; I'm looking at this line, I'm assuming this is the shoulder line? Mr. Sipperly approached and explained what is on the drawing

Vice Chair Moloughney; in the conversation with DOT to me it was that sudden oh here's the driveway. Practically DOT looks at all of that stuff

Chair Carroll; the traffic people that do this stuff are very thorough with reviews.

There was then a discussion about the guide rails and shoulder

Mr. Sipperly; stated that the curb cut would be very visible

Chair Carroll; asked about some kind of sign out there.

Vice Chair Moloughney; suggested a VMS (variable message sign), just to let people know. In terms of the Credit Union's sign, I see that is being relocated, and I thought I heard you say that DOT would not let you move that out to the ROW,

Mr. Sipperly; correct. The closest we could move it would be whatever is allowed subject to signs with the Zoning Board of Appeals and we wouldn't gain much.

Vice Chair Moloughney; the traffic safety folks, they are the most by the book, your line of sight must be 500 feet, if it is 498 you have to redesign it.

Mr. Sipperly; stated that they started this back in 2000 with the whole process. There is a review board that needs to grant these conveyances and if they are not a high priority then they push and push. It wasn't until recently that the bank received the approval.

Vice Chair Moloughney; and I was on the board when we approved the original building and I remember this discussion and the desire at the time, if 787 could be reclassified and we could get a curb cut and it was a gamble for the bank to pick that spot that has terrible access, you have to go all the way around and go down this side street and I think with this, to make that whole, an entity that came to the community to an under utilized piece of property, and has been here for at least 15 years, they are committed.

Chair Carroll; open to public comment.

Steve Napier; resident of 6 Vine Street in Cohoes, when he was on Common Council when 787 was converted into a Boulevard, said that curb cuts were thought to reduce speed on 787 and also gave access to landlocked properties on 787. The idea here is that this is the first but not the last, the hope of that these curb cuts themselves would slow down traffic.

Member Nadeau; stated that he would still like to see some safety, signage, or something to notify people.

Member McCormick; with the egress on 787 and high-speed traffic I think that.....

Mr. Sipperly; it's no different than Central Avenue or any other place, there are many other throughfares that have many more challenges. I think the argument that people are used to it isn't any argument, they will have to get used to it, with the curb cut you can't not put it there because someone isn't going to see it. It's the only area that makes sense to put it.

Chair Carroll; anyone else from the public have any comments? Being none public comment session was closed. Do we have a motion to accept?

Vice Chair Moloughney; I move to accept the plans as submitted 2nd by Member D'Angelico motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member Nadeau	X	
Member McCormick	X	
Member D'Angelico	X	

CONSIDERATION OF A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR 105 HUDSON AVENUE

Chair Carroll; should we table 105 Hudson Ave? Do I have a motion to table for 105 Hudson Ave. I would like to see a floor plan because I have questions about it.

Motion made to table the application made by Member Nadeau 2nd by Member McCormick motion carried unanimously.

Chair Carroll; do I have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Motion made to adjourn the meeting was made by Member McCormick 2nd by Member Nadeau motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member Nadeau	X	
Member McCormick	X	
Member D'Angelico	X	

Meeting adjourned at 7:10PM

Submitted by:

Sharon Butler

Secretary