

PLAN COMMISSION
City of Hartford
September 12, 2016

PRESENT: Chairperson Michalak, Members Stapleton, Regan, Henke, Alderperson Liaison Jewell

ABSENT: Member Kuepper

ALSO PRESENT: City Planner Justin Drew

Call to Order – Chairperson Michalak called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Hartford City Hall, 109 N. Main Street.

Minutes – Motion by Regan, second by Anderk approving the minutes of August 8, 2016. Motion carried.

Appearances – There were no appearances.

Sign Review: Carpenter Technology, 71 N. Main Street

Executive Summary Review:

David Carpenter submitted an application for a wall sign for his business, Carpenter Technology, at 71 N. Main Street. There are two businesses at the front of this building. Lotus Be Well, the north storefront, received an approval for wall and window signage in 2015. Carpenter Technology occupies the south storefront and proposes a 20' x 3' wall sign above the business windows. Currently there is no wall sign for the south storefront. The proposed sign covers the entire signable area for this storefront. Taken together, the Lotus Be Well sign and the Carpenter Technology sign are within the maximum allowed square footage for the B-3 district. The sign is black and white. The largest portion of the sign is black on white, and includes the name of the company and a telephone logo. On either side of this is white on black informational lettering, including a phone number. The sign is comprised of durabond with a polyurethane finish, designed to be lightweight and durable. No illumination is planned. Planning Staff recommended approval of the sign.

Plan Commission Discussion, Carpenter Technology Sign:

Mr. Drew reviewed the executive summary. Chairperson Michalak requested discussion. There was no discussion. Alderperson Liaison Jewell noted that he would be recusing himself; he is the contractor for the sign. Motion by Henke, second by Stapleton approving the Carpenter Technology sign. Motion carried.

Public Hearing for Proposed Creation of TID #10, Proposed Boundaries, and Proposed Project Plan

Chairperson Michalak opened the hearing and requested reading of the Public Notice. Mr. Drew read the notice and proceeded to the staff review, introducing Vandewalle & Associates representatives Jolena Presti and Jorian Giorno. Mr. Drew reviewed the procedure for the review and approval of a Tax Increment District, noting Joint Review Board, Plan Commission and

Common Council duties and responsibilities, as well as the timeline for meetings for each: Joint Review Board (composed of representatives of all taxing bodies and a citizen representative) meets first to review preliminary documents; a Plan Commission Public Hearing is then held; the Common Council approves the TID and related documents; the Joint Review Board has final approval. Mr. Drew explained the Plan Commission's distinct responsibilities: approve a resolution recommending boundaries of the district, zoning, and conformity to the City's comprehensive plan; render an opinion on the feasibility and legality of the project plan; votes whether or not to approve project plan; makes a recommendation whether or not City should approve creation of the district. Mr. Drew requested that Ms. Presti continue. Ms. Presti reviewed what Tax Incremental Financing is as a financing mechanism and tool for revitalization; went over key terms; reviewed how the mechanism works (where money comes from, where spent, when terminated); explained what is required for specific TIDs; and explained what the "but for" test is (improvements could not occur but for the creation of the TID). Ms. Presti spent some time reviewing the development plan from last fall, explaining the process to put it together, noting that this is a good time for a TID at this location due to interest in immediate development and mentioned some of the 'catalytic sites' under consideration (hotel, brew pub). Mr. Drew reviewed the boundaries of the district, explained the reason for including the Mill Pond (contiguity) and requested that Ms. Presti discuss the ½ mile boundary around the TID. Ms. Presti noted that there is a boundary around the TID which might benefit from development within the TID, possibly for improvement within areas that could connect in some way to the TID (signage, welcoming areas, awning connection locations). The TID area itself includes 44 parcels and covers almost 8.5 acres. Ms. Presti also noted the difference between rehabilitation & conservation, and blight, noting that TID 10 is a rehabilitation and conservation TID and nothing about the TID implies neglect on the part of owners in the TID. Mr. Drew explained some of the possible projects and uses in the TID, such as burying power lines, and finishing the Mill Pond. Ms. Presti also noted a possible façade improvement program, streetscaping, traffic management, bike/pedestrian improvements, parking improvements, signage, and awning connections. Mr. Drew reviewed some value increment/financed projections and options. Chairperson Michalak requested appearances in favor. Tom Hostad, on behalf of the Hartford Area Development Corporation and the Downtown Project Management Team, and Danny Dulak, owner of Second Chance Ventures, spoke in favor of approving the TID, with Mr. Dulak also asking if the ½ mile radius area would be 'tiered' in comparison to the TID itself when allocation decisions were made. Chairperson Michalak requested appearances in opposition. Jan Hatch, 30 Mill Street, appeared with questions about the boundaries and what might precipitate changing them. She also asked when the meetings (for the development plan) took place last fall and how many people attended. Chairperson Michalak closed the hearing and invited discussion by Plan Commissioners. Member Henke asked Mr. Drew to review the questions asked at the podium. Mr. Drew reviewed the process of the downtown plan process, noting that meetings were held in October and December of 2015, with 50 – 60 people at each meeting. The overall downtown plan was approved by the Plan Commission last December, and by the Common Council in early February 2016. Mr. Drew compared the downtown plan process with a detailed vision statement, and the TID process as the 'nuts and bolts' work to fulfill the vision statement. Mr. Drew clarified his

remarks about the changing boundaries in a TID: the boundaries in TID 9 were changed at the request of a landowner, to include more land. The change was incorporated into the TID approval process, which is allowed. TID 10 boundaries have not changed. Ms. Presti then reviewed the question about tiering the ½ mile radius, explaining what to expect as the increment grows. Member Henke asked for some boundary ‘landmarks’ of the ½ mile radius. Mr. Drew explained that landmarks could not be specifically identified but in general, the east boundary is Wilson Avenue; north is around the area of the CBRF (The Gardens of Hartford) north of Prospect; west is almost to Wacker Drive and south is the Chandelier Ballroom on Jefferson Avenue. Chairperson Michalak asked if 100 N. Main is part of the TID. Mr. Drew confirmed and explained that boundaries were chosen to primarily include properties that could see a large value increase. The rest of the area should expect to see values increase as a result of the TID increment increase. Member Henke asked if the base value assessment would be for 2016 or 2017. Mr. Drew responded that the assessment would be for 2017, as there will not be enough building in 2016 to create a desirable increment. Chairperson Michalak requested a motion to approve Resolution PC-2016-001, a resolution approving the district boundaries and project plan for proposed tax increment finance district #10. Motion by Jewell, second by Anderek to approve Resolution PC-2016-001. Chairperson Michalak requested discussion. Member Henke asked if a roll call was required. No roll call was necessary. Motion carried.

Review of a Rezoning Request for 220 Union Street

Executive Summary Review:

Hartford Historic Preservation Foundation requested rezoning for the property located at 220 Union Street, tax key number 36-2102-018-011. The property is currently zoned Rs-4 Single Family Residential District. The requested zoning is B-3 General Business District. Hartford Historical Preservation Foundation wishes to restore the property and use the mansion for small gatherings, dinner parties and wine tastings. In addition, the HHPF intends to use the mansion as an extension of the Chandelier Ballroom, allowing guests to utilize the property as an ‘inn’ for bridal parties to stay when hosting weddings at the ballroom. In August, a change was made to the City of Hartford 2030 Smart Growth Plan to allow for commercial development at this site. Following an approved rezoning, a conditional use permit application will be submitted and reviewed. The property is surrounded by single-family and duplex zonings. One block south is B-3 General Business District zoning for multi-family and commercial uses. The property is approximately 925’ to the east and 265’ to the north of the Downtown Business Improvement District, an area predominately zoned B-3. The property meets the area (5,000 square feet) requirements for B-3. There are no setback requirements in the B-3 district. Planning Staff recommended approval.

Plan Commission Discussion, Rezoning Request, 220 Union Street:

Mr. Drew reviewed the executive summary. Chairperson Michalak requested discussion. Member Henke noted that he would be recusing himself due to his involvement with Hartford Historic Preservation Foundation. Motion by Anderek, second by Jewell to recommend that the Common Council approve the rezone from Rs-4 to B-3 for 220 Union Street. Motion carried.

Site Plan Review for Birch Crossing Apartments, Located North of the Current Terminus of Liberty Avenue

Executive Summary Review:

The Common Council approved the Annexation Petition and assigned a temporary zoning of Rm-3 in July, 2016. The Plan Commission approved a Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Unit Development (PUD) in August. The PUD allows for 12-unit buildings. Premier Real Estate Management has submitted a plan for seven 12-unit buildings. The property is zoned Rm-3 Multi-Family Residential. Multi-Family buildings of this size are allowed in the Rm-3 Multi-Family Residential District as a Conditional Use (up to 24 unit buildings can be approved). Because the development involves the dedication of public Right-of-Way, approval will need to be conditioned upon City approval of a Certified Survey Map. The property is surrounded by the Rubicon River to the north, undeveloped town land to the west, the Libby Lagoon to the east, and Wal-Mart to the south. The proposed multi-family buildings would be arranged around both sides of an extended Liberty Avenue. Three of the buildings east of Liberty Avenue extended would be arranged around a private driveway. Building placement shifted somewhat due to the presence of wetlands and floodplain on the property. The proposed Multi-Family buildings would have the following setbacks and lot coverage:

- **26 feet** from the proposed extended Liberty Avenue Right-of-Way
- **25 feet** from the western property line
- **135 feet** from the eastern property line
- **40 feet** from the northern property line
- Lot Coverage would be approximately **12.4%** of the 15.0-acre site, below the 25% maximum allowed by Code in the Rm-3 District.

The adopted Smart Growth Plan identifies this area for medium density residential development (5.8 – 8.0 units per acre). The area to the west and south calls for commercial development as well. The area to the north is identified as conservancy and is not intended to be developed. The density proposed for this development would be 6.1 units per acre. As proposed, the site plan would meet the zoning requirements of the Rm-3 zoning District with an approved Planned Unit Development. The Developer proposes two bedroom apartments arranged in 12-unit structures. The proposed buildings would be two stories tall. Buildings would have 1-car attached garage stalls for each unit. There would be no common hallways. In addition, a maintenance building is proposed at the south end of the development. The buildings are proposed in a Prairie Style, with low roof pitches and large overhangs. The façade would be composed of a brick wainscot around the first floor, first floor brick at the corners of the buildings, with two tones of vinyl siding on the second floor, as well as vinyl “cedar” shake accents between some of the windows. Numerous changes of plane and windows are present along each façade. Dormers do a good job of breaking up the scale of the building. Colors would include tan, gray, taupe, and green. The plan proposes an extension of the Liberty Avenue Right-of-Way north of its current terminus. The Right-of Way would travel north, then angle towards the northwest. This layout would facilitate the continued expansion of Liberty Avenue towards the northwest. The City always insists on at least two access points (or the potential for two access points when additional development occurs) to ensure proper emergency access. The plan will meet this requirement when the east and west ends of Liberty Avenue connect. In the interim, the buildings flank both sides of the proposed Liberty Avenue extension, and emergency access is satisfactory. Public sidewalk is shown on the west side of Liberty Avenue extended and an 8-foot wide asphalt trail is proposed for the east side of Liberty Avenue extended. At some point in the future, the Rubicon River Trail will extend just north of this development. In order to allow access to this

trail, Staff will work with the Developer to identify potential pathways within the development, as well as identifying a pedestrian easement on the west side of the property. This easement can be incorporated into the Certified Survey Map. The proposal indicates 84 garage stalls, 83 parking stalls, and parking space in front of each attached garage. In total, 251 parking spaces are provided, or an average of 2.9 spaces per unit (the Code requires 2 spaces per unit). The property slopes down from southwest to northeast. The grading plan calls for the southwest portions of the development to be brought down and the lower areas near the river to be brought up, creating a fairly flat development site. Stormwater will be directed to a series of ponds towards the Rubicon River. An engineering consultant is reviewing the grading plan, and City Staff will notify the developer if any changes are required. Sanitary sewer and water main are located in the Liberty Avenue Right-of-Way directly south of the property. Some minor changes to the type, size, and coverage of the mains were required, and the Developer is working to amend the infrastructure construction plans. The Developer is also working with Hartford Electric to establish easement locations. The submitted landscape plan shows 32 Black Hills Spruce, 13 Autumn Blaze Maples, and 8 Thornless Honey Locusts, as well as 81 ornamental trees planted around the buildings and driveways. Many of the spruce trees and some of the junipers are proposed to be located near the south and west property line. This is the most likely location for the electric easement. If the electric easement is located in these areas, those spruce and junipers will need to be relocated to other locations on the site. A large number of deciduous and evergreen shrubs and flowers would surround the foundation of each building (more than 127 per building). No street trees are shown along the Liberty Avenue Right-of-Way on the landscape plan. Street Trees are required by 12.0815 of the Code. The Developer will need to submit a street tree plan within two months. The volunteer City Forester will review and approve the plan. Trash enclosures are shown on each side of each building. Staff recommends that the dumpster be enclosed with wood fencing and a gate. A photometric plan has not been submitted. If exterior parking lot lights are proposed, a photometric plan meeting City requirements will need to be reviewed and approved. Planning Staff recommended approval of the Site Plan for Birch Crossing Apartments subject to City approval of a Certified Survey Map, and submittal of a Street Tree Plan within two months of site plan approval.

Plan Commission Discussion, Birch Crossing Site Plan:

Mr. Drew reviewed the executive summary and noted that a street tree plan had been submitted. Chairperson Michalak asked, on a related issue, if sidewalks were being considered on Wacker Drive for pedestrians trying to walk to WalMart. Mr. Drew noted that the City had looked at the possibility of a walking path south of the airport to the Rubicon River trail but expense was a stumbling block. Discussions continue on a pedestrian/bike path on Wacker. Chairperson Michalak asked if the Birch Crossing development could be pushed to include a path north to State Street. Mr. Drew noted that the City could not connect at this time due to open farmland between the development and any walking areas. Chairperson Michalak encouraged the development of walking paths that would allow people to get to WalMart, since he hears from many constituents on this issue. Member Regan asked if the developer was amenable to the easement needed on the north side. Mr. Drew asked the representative from Lynch & Associates to come to the podium to discuss. The Lynch & Associates representative noted that company attorneys would need to review the request, due to pedestrians being so close to buildings. Mr. Drew noted that an easement could be negotiated as part of the Development Agreement. Member Henke asked if this was the only place a pedestrian path could go. Mr. Drew stated that it is not the only location, but it is the shortest path. It is not directly against the buildings but

City of Hartford Plan Commission, September 12, 2016

against the parking lot, and screening would be appropriate. Chairperson Michalak requested further discussion, and requested a motion. Motion by Henke, second by Regan to approve the Birch Crossing site plan, subject to approval of a Certified Survey Map. Motion carried.

Adjournment – Motion adjourned by call of chairperson at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Drew, City Planner

Compiled by Char Smelter, Planning Secretary