

PLAN COMMISSION
City of Hartford
September 10 , 2018

PRESENT: Chairperson Timothy C. Michalak, Vice-Chairperson Dennis Regan, Members Tom Stapleton, Tony Anderek, Scott Henke, Alderperson Liaison Barry Wintringer

ABSENT AND EXCUSED: Ralph Kuepper

ALSO PRESENT: City Planner Justin Drew

Call to Order - Chairperson Michalak called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. in the Common Council Chambers of Hartford City Hall, 109 N. Main Street.

Minutes - Motion by Henke, second by Regan to approve minutes of July 23 and August 13. Motion carries.

Appearances - Chairperson Michalak invited appearances. There were no appearances.

Sign Review: Schauer Arts Center, 30 S. Johnson Street

Executive Summary Review

Schauer Arts and Activities Center submitted a sign permit application for three wall signs at the location of the former Community School of the Arts, 30 S. Johnson Street. In 2011, the Community School of the Arts was moved from the Schauer Center to 30 S. Johnson Street, located in the same building that also houses a business at 31 West Sumner Street. The building fronts on three access streets. At the time, three signs were also proposed, but one of the wall signs fronted on S. Johnson Street. The signs received approval on August 8, 2011. The current proposal shows two wall signs and an entrance sign on the S. Johnson Street side of the building, all at the 'bump out' area of the 30 S. Johnson Street entrance. The north sign is 3' x 2.25', and is the standard Schauer Arts Center logo. The middle sign is also 3' x 2.25', but oriented horizontally. It identifies this location for the Milwaukee Ballet School and Academy. The third, southernmost sign is located in the alcove at the entrance itself, and identifies this location for the Creative Arts Studios. It also notes the 30 S. Johnson Street address. The signs are made of aluminum composite, printed with gloss laminate. The signs do not necessarily match but are not supposed to. The activities at this site are under the Schauer Arts Center umbrella. The signs serve to identify the different entities located in the building. The signs meet code requirements for size, placement and color and provide complete information for location and activity. Planning Staff recommended approval of the proposed wall signs.

Plan Commission Discussion, Schauer Arts Center Signs, 30 S. Johnson Street

Mr. Drew reviewed the Executive Summary. Chairperson Michalak requested comments. There were no comments. Motion by Henke, second by Stapleton to approve the Schauer Arts Center signs. Motion carried.

Site Plan Review: North Bookend Apartments, Located at 225 North Main Street
Executive Summary Review:

North Bookend, LLC proposes to build an 82-unit apartment building at the southwest corner of North Main Street and West State Street with 82 stalls of underground parking and numerous amenities. A multi-family development was identified as one of the key catalytic projects to spur downtown development in the downtown plan endorsed by both the Plan Commission and the Common Council. New, high end residential units will create additional business opportunities for shops, restaurants and bars within the downtown. Apartments are allowed in the B-3 District as a conditional use. In July 2018, the Plan Commission granted a Conditional Use Permit for 82 apartment units plus underground parking. The Developer has now submitted a site plan and a development agreement will be discussed and voted on by the Council in the near future. If these two items are approved, the City will purchase the lots, use two Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation grants to demolish the existing buildings, clean up the property and cap or remove the contaminated soil. The City will also need to approve a CSM creating the development lot and the new City parking lot. At that point, the City would turn the development lot back over to the developer so that construction can commence. The proposed development site is zoned B-3 General Business and is surrounded by two family properties to the west, two-family and multi-family properties to the north, and B-3 zoned properties to the east and south. The proposed apartment would be arranged in an L-shape fronting on West State Street and North Main Street. There are no setback requirements in the B-3 District. The proposed building would have the following setbacks: ***14 feet** from the West State Street Right-of-Way. ***10.4 Feet** from the North Main Street Right-of-Way ***10 feet** from the North Johnson Street Right-of-Way ***64 feet** from the railroad tracks *Lot Coverage would be approximately **64.4%** of the 1.02-acre site *The height of the building would be **55 feet**, equal to the 55 feet allowed by Code. The adopted Smart Growth Plan identifies this area for commercial / mixed use development. The Developer proposes a five story building with an underground parking lot below and another one taking up approximately half of the first floor. A mix of studios, one bedroom units, bedroom plus den, two bedrooms, and 3 bedroom units are proposed. Building amenities include a dog wash area, bike repair area, community room, and storage areas. In addition, two offices are shown on the first floor and full time maintenance and leasing staff are proposed. The façade would be composed of two tones of masonry material, two tones of cement board siding. Above that would be an off-white fiber cement siding. Numerous changes of plane are present on all of the elevations. The southeast corner is topped by an overhanging flat roof, supported by steel beams. Balconies and numerous windows are present in front of each of the units. The plan shows one pedestrian entrance to the building on West State Street and another on the south side of the building, accessible from the City and building parking lots. Autos would enter the lower parking garage from North Main Street and the City parking lot and the upper parking garage from West State Street, near the western edge of the building. The plan shows a total of 82 underground parking spaces, as well as 10 surface spaces. In addition, Tenants of the apartment complex could purchase annual overnight parking passes for this lot. Given that the majority of the units are one bedrooms, Staff believes that the proposed parking is sufficient for the intended use. The property slopes down from north to south. The Developer has completed a grading and stormwater management plan for the City

Engineer's review and approval. The City Engineer noted that no stormwater management improvements are shown on the plan. As a redevelopment, the City Engineer believes that the site is exempt from DNR requirements, but emphasizes that an erosion control and stormwater management plan still needs to be sent to the DNR, and that the determination on stormwater exemption is the DNR's to make.

As part of the development, Hartford Electric will be burying the electric lines along West State Street. The Developer is completing a landscaping plan, which will need to come back to the Plan Commission for review and approval. Dumpsters will be stored in the parking garages. A photometric plan has not been submitted. A photometric plan meeting City requirements will need to be reviewed and approved by the City Engineer. Planning Staff recommended approval, subject to submittal of a landscaping plan and photometric plan by December 31, 2018.

Plan Commission Discussion, North Bookend Site Plan

Mr. Drew reviewed the executive summary. Chairperson Michalak asked for comments. Member Anderek asked for further clarification on public/private parking. Mr. Drew explained that there should not be much impact on public parking; once the project is done there will be as many parking stalls for public use as there are now, in a better configuration. Currently less than 10 cars park in this lot overnight, additional parking from tenants should not make an impact, and tenants who are not able to park during high-use times can still park in other lots around the downtown area. Chairperson Michalak asked for further comments. There were no further comments. Motion by Henke, second by Regan to approve North Bookend Site Plan. Motion carried.

Site Plan Review Update: Vault Safe Self Storage, 1000 Independence Avenue

Executive Summary Review:

Vault Safe Storage, LLC is proposing a large self-storage/warehouse complex on the northern portion of 7520 West Sumner Street. The Council approved an annexation petition for the property in July of this year. The annexation served to separate out a new lot from the parent parcel, which remained in the Town. In August, the Plan Commission approved a site plan, though there were last minute changes that led to some confusion. Keller (the builder and contractor of the project), has submitted an updated site plan incorporating a new berm and landscaping between the buildings and Independence Avenue. The updated plans also include calling out that the fence in front of the buildings will all be black chain link fence. The berm at the front of the site along Independence Avenue is proposed for in front of the building and the stormwater pond. It will be 3 feet tall with a total of 9 ornamental trees (Prairie Fire Crab, Pagoda Dogwood, Callery Pear), and 47 deciduous shrubs. This should adequately screen the numerous garage doors and chain link fence from the street. Staff recommended approval.

Plan Commission Discussion, Vault Safe Self Storage Updated Site Plan:

Mr. Drew reviewed the executive summary. Chairperson Michalak expressed concern about consistent watering of the plantings on the berm, noting that the site will not have water and drought conditions could kill the plants. Mr. Drew stated that the plants were chosen for drought resistance but a requirement for replacement in the event of a die-off could be discussed with the applicant. Chairperson Michalak asked for further comments. There were no further comments. Motion by Anderek, second by Wintringer to approve site plan. Motion carried.

Planners Report: October Date Change and Housing Numbers

Mr. Drew noted that due to a scheduling conflict, he is requesting that the October Plan Commission meeting date be changed from October 8 to October 15. No time change is contemplated. Members were amenable.

Mr. Drew reviewed housing numbers for new home construction. Due to the recent increase in multi-family units, the City's ratio of housing is slightly off from its ideal composition of 55% single family/15% two family/30% multi-family. Some subdivisions are almost entirely built out while others have a reasonable number of lots still. The approval of the North Bookend apartments will further increase the number of multi-family units, but proposed additions of new phases in existing subdivisions and the attachment of the Neuville land earlier this summer should balance out the ratios. Chairperson Michalak asked if May 2003 was a record year for the City of Hartford regarding new home construction. Mr. Drew noted that it was the highest on record, with 40 houses built in Western Hills alone (the Parade of Homes was that year). Chairperson Michalak asked if the City might reach a population of 16,000 by the 2020 census. Mr. Drew replied that, at 15,100 this year, there is a good possibility that 2020 will see a census number close to or reaching 16,000. Housing starts do not seem to be slowing down anytime soon.

Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m. by call of Chair

Respectfully submitted,
Justin Drew, City Planner

Compiled by Char Smelter, Planning Secretary