



**City Planning Board**  
Department of Planning & Community Development  
City Hall - Roosevelt Square  
Mount Vernon, New York 10550-2060  
(914) 699-7230

Shawyn Patterson-Howard  
Mayor

Darryl Selsey  
Chair

**MEETING MINUTES  
PLANNING BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
for January 4, 2023**

A regular meeting of the City Planning Board was held on Wednesday, January 4, 2023 at 6:30 PM in the Mayor's Conference Room, Room 107A on the first floor of City Hall. Applicants and members of the public were permitted to attend and make public comment via in person attendance.

The Chair read the meeting notice into the record then indicated that the roll call was the first item on the agenda. The Chair asked the staff to start the live streaming of the meeting on Facebook.

**ROLL CALL**

The Chair called the roll: In addition to Chairman Darryl Selsey, attending were the following Commissioners: Mr. Frank Trolio, Ms. Vivien Salmon, Ms. Helene Thompson-Njenga, Mr. Charles Whites, Mr. Jamael Thompson, and Mr. Lesly Zamor (via Zoom).

Also attending were Katherine Mella, Associate Commissioner, Maria Pace, Secretary to the Planning Board, Bob Galvin, Plan Administrator (via Zoom) and U. Nkechi Nwachukwu, land use counsel.

The Chair indicated that there was a quorum present and opened the meeting at 6:30 pm.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Chair asked if the Commissioners had an opportunity to review the minutes of December 7, 2022 with land use counsel's edits. There being no further changes, the Chair made a motion to approve the minutes for December 7, 2022, seconded by Commissioner Salmon and carried by a vote of 7-0.

**Adjournment**

**3.1 Case No. 21 – 2022: 339A - 341 North High Street (Section 165.45, Block 1094, Lot 43) located in the RMF-10 Zone.**

Applicant requested a second adjournment to the February 1, 2023 meeting to integrate the comments provided by the Planning Board.

**Closed Public Hearing**

**3.2 The Chair read the description of Case No. 19 – 2022: 18 South High Street (Section 164.76, Block 1064, Lots 5 & 6) located in the Mount Vernon West TOD-Transition Zone.**

**The Chair** read into the record how the legal notice for this matter was published.

The Applicant is the Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary and Our Lady of Mount Carmel located on the east side of High Street. Michael Stein, Hudson Engineering & Consulting, has provided engineering and stormwater management services. The Church is requesting a site plan and special permit approval for the development of a parking lot for the Church parishioners on an existing vacant property at 18 South High Street with associated stormwater management and lighting. The lot is 6,704 sf and was formerly occupied by a 2 ½ story residence. The vacant property is on the west side of High Street and is bordered by residences on either side.

The proposed asphalt parking lot is across the street from St. Mary’s Church at 23 South High Street. The property is in the Mount Vernon West TOD-Transition zone which allows an off-street parking lot with a special permit from the Planning Board.

The proposed parking lot includes 20 parking spaces with a 4’ high fence for security and gated access to limit access to the lot when not in use. Applicant will also construct a retaining wall on the south side of the parking lot. The proposed lot will also include the installation of four overhead lights to provide adequate lighting of the parking area. The lighting will only be utilized when the parking lot is in use and will otherwise remain off. There are four 15’ light poles proposed and two will be located on each side of the lot.

**The Chair and Commissioners** reviewed the draft resolution that was written for this application.

**Mr. Michael Stein** advised that the curbing will be concrete rather than granite as it is less expensive.

**Commissioner Trolio** advised that granite would be the better option for the curbing because it can withstand daily use over concrete, which translates into cost savings over the long-run as it's virtually maintenance-free. Several other Commissioners agreed with this point and agreed that specifying granite curbing should be added as a condition to the application.

There was also discussion regarding the fencing and gate, both of which are necessary to the parking lot. It was agreed that the fencing should be black wrought iron.

**Commissioner Thompson** recommended industrial fencing for the gate itself and commercial grade fencing for the perimeter.

**Mr. Galvin** then reviewed Part 2 of the short form EAF to complete the SEQRA process, which was found to have no significant adverse environmental effect.

**The Chair** then made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration which was seconded by Commissioner Whites and carried by a vote of 6-0.<sup>1</sup>

**The Chair** also made a motion to approve the amended resolution with conditions including a wrought iron fence, granite curbing and industrial grade fencing for the gate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Whites and carried by a vote of 6-0.

### **Closed Public Hearing**

#### **3.3 The Chair read the description of Case No. 22 – 2022 357 Bedford Avenue (Section 169.25, Block 4052, Lots 12 & 13) in the R2-4.5 Residential District**

**The Chair** read into the record how the legal notice for this matter was published.

The Applicant is Sanatkumar Muhajir (Testamentary Trust). The Applicant's representative and architect is Mr. Tom Abillama. The Application is for a proposed subdivision and consists of two properties on the east side of Bedford Avenue at East Fifth Street.

The property at 357 Bedford Avenue (Lot 13) is an existing two-family residence consisting of 5,075 sf. The adjacent property (Lot 12) consists of 7,500 sf located at the northeast corner of Bedford Avenue and East Fifth Street. The properties are situated across from Graham Elementary School (which extends the entire length of the west side of Bedford Avenue).

---

<sup>1</sup> NOTE: Votes of 6-0 were taken before Commissioner Zamor joined the meeting via Zoom.

**The Applicant will demolish an existing 2-car garage on Lot 12 and subdivide into two lots with attached two family residences on each lot. Lot 12.1.A and 12.2.B will provide parking in a garage under each unit.**

**The ZBA provided the required zoning variances at their meeting held on September 20, 2022.**

**The Chair and Commissioners reviewed the draft resolution that was written for this application.**

**Mr. Tom Abillama advised that the fire safety issue was addressed and that there will be 2 bathrooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor and ½ bath on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.**

**Mr. Galvin said he reviewed the resolution and the conditions discussed at the December meeting and all were all addressed. He also reminded the Planning Board that it assumed lead agency for SEQRA at the December meeting.**

**Mr. Galvin then reviewed Part 2 of the short form EAF to complete the SEQRA process, which was found to have no significant adverse environmental effect. Mr. Galvin said the City Engineer should review #7B of the EAF regarding wastewater treatment.**

**The Chair made a motion to issue a Negative Declaration, which was seconded by Commissioner Thompson and carried by a vote of 6-0.**

**The Chair made a motion to approve the resolution for this application, which was seconded by Commissioner Thompson and carried by a vote of 6-0.**

### **New Public Hearing**

**3.4 The Chair read the description of Case No. 12-2021: 219 West Third Street (Section 169.21, Block 3014, Lots 22 and 23) in the Commercial Business District – Request for a one-year extension of site plan and special permit approval**

**The Chair read into the record how the legal notice for this matter was published.**

---

**The Applicant, Gyory Partners, is represented by Mr. Tom Abillama, architect. The Applicant provided a letter dated November 23, 2022 requesting a one-year extension of site plan and special permit approval. The Planning Board approved the site plan and special permit by a motion at its November 3, 2021 meeting.**

The site plan and special permit approval is for the construction of a five-story self-storage building on a 21,074-sf property. The project proposed to include 5,000 sf of retail space on the ground floor and 53,760 sf of self-storage warehouse space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> floors. The proposal also included 16 at-grade parking spaces as well as an additional one-way travel lane that will provide access to a potential drive-thru window for the retail space.

There have been no changes made to the previously approved site plan nor have any changes been made in the surrounding area which would affect the project. The applicant is seeking the one-year extension to obtain a building permit and financing for the project.

**SEQRA Determination** – The Planning Board has considered this application for an extension of time as a Type II action pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), 6 NYCRR 617.5(26) (“routine or continuing agency administration and management”), thereby ending the SEQRA process.

**Mr. Tom Abillama** gave an overview of the project again and said that there were no changes to the site plan.

---

**The Chair** asked if there were any public comments. Several residents expressed their concerns regarding the following issues:

- Flooding in the area; catch basins can't contain the water
- Empty lots filled with construction equipment
- Increased traffic because of body shops
- Residents did not receive notice of the public hearing; nothing posted online
- Concern that no one listens to residents
- Multiple garages where people hang out
- Loitering, inappropriate activity, increased noise, increased crime
- No parking
- Numerous accidents at the intersection by the site and the need for stop signs
- Oversaturation of self-storage facilities
- Need to leave Mount Vernon to go to the theater, restaurants, etc.
- Nothing good happening on the South side, no problems on the North side
- Employment opportunities for local residents with new businesses coming in

**The Chair** requested that Planning Department staff:

- Provide him with a list of contacts within City Hall (e.g. DPW, Water Dept., etc.) that residents can call when they have a problem or issue.
- Accept videos, photos, etc. from residents to forward to appropriate parties.
- Communicate with the City Council regarding infrastructure fees
- Share concerns raised during meeting with appropriate departments for follow up

**The Chair** advised that he is aware that the infrastructure is old and in disrepair but that the city does make efforts to ensure that any run-off is contained. He also said that this and other storage locations are extremely well-lit and have CCTV for safety reasons. The

Chair also asked the Applicant whether the property owner would be open to prioritizing local residents for employment opportunities.

**Mr. Abillama** said he would speak to the owner about this suggestion.

**Mr. Galvin** noted that permanent employment at the site might be minor but that there is an opportunity with construction jobs. The Planning Board can add this as a condition for the extension.

**Commissioner Trolio** commented that many people tie their gutters into the sewers which creates the overflow. He said that new projects must ensure that water is contained on the property.

**Commissioner Zamor** commented that the Planning Board does care and looks at all neighborhoods and is very fair in deliberating over applications. He also said that storage facilities are some of the most well-kept facilities.

**The Chair** then made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Salmon and carried by a vote of 6-0.

**The Chair** made a motion to have staff prepare the resolution approving the requested extension of time to November 3, 2023 to obtain the building permit, seconded by Commissioner Trolio and carried by a vote of 7-0.

There being no other business, **the Chair** made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Salmon and carried by a vote 7-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 pm

Maria Pace, Secretary to the Planning Board  
Bob Galvin, AICP, Planning Administrator

---