



City of Binghamton Planning Department

SUMMARY OF MINUTES CITY OF BINGHAMTON PLANNING COMMISSION	
MEETING DATE: February 6, 2024	LOCATION: City Council Chambers, City Hall
CALLED TO ORDER: 5:15PM	RECORDER OF MINUTES: Shalin Patel

ROLL CALL		
COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	PRESENT:	ABSENT:
Nicholas Corcoran (chair)	X	
Joseph De Angelo	X	
Christopher Dziedzic (vice chair)	X	
Mario DiFulvio	X	
Steve Seepersaud	X	
Kelly Weiss	X	
Emmanuel Priest	X	
STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:	TITLE & DEPARTMENT:	
Tito Martinez	Assistant Director, Planning Department	
Shalin Patel	Planner, Planning Department	
Greg Buell	Zoning Officer, Planning Department	
Elisabeth Rossow	Corporation Counsel	
Robert Heary	Corporation Counsel	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES		
MOTION to approve the December 5, 2023 meeting minutes as written		
FIRST: Dziedzic	SECOND: Seepersaud	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):

SEQR DETERMINATIONS	
ADDRESS: 89 Court St	CASE NUMBER: PC-2024-0001
DESCRIPTION FROM AGENDA: Site Plan Review and Special Use Permit for the conversion of floors 2-4 of an existing commercial building to 9 dwelling units with 18 total bedrooms.	
APPLICANT: Chianis + Anderson Architects	
REPRESENTATIVE(S): Kyle Weeks and Jeffery Smith (Chianis + Anderson Architects)	
DISCUSSION POINTS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Much of existing building will be used as is; working with/around pre-existing stairs and elevator ▪ 2-4 floors of the building are all vacant; except for the first floor, which has commercial usage ▪ 3 units per floor with 2 bedrooms per unit – none of the units are being crammed as they each possess sufficient amount of square footage ▪ Other part of the project relies on exterior work of the building, which is eligible for historical preservation tax credits, which will be an important part of funding 	

- The mechanical and fire alarm systems will need to be upgraded and further laid out plans to allow bedrooms to have windows to bring it up to building code
- **Commissioner (Dziedzic) asked** about the applicant’s plan on garbage collection.
- **Representative (Smith) commented**, there is no surrounding property for this building, so the plan is to store garbage for tenants on each floor in the space adjacent to the elevator (building personnel will have to bring it down for weekly collection).
- **Staff (Martinez) asked**, if there will be a private hauler that picks up the garbage or where will the garbage be placed on pickup day.
- **Representative (Smith) commented**, for now there is no information on such idea, for now it is assumed that the city’s garbage pickup services will be utilized. Garbage will be placed on the curb for pickup days.
- **Commissioner (Weiss) commented**, learning from the past, putting garbage out onto the curb for a large building as such involved in the project has not been a great situation for the city – it spills around, invites pests, and creates bad odor. Is there anyway the applicant can find a solution to place a dumpster to mitigate this issue?
 - **Commissioner (Dziedzic) asked**, referring to the architectural plans, there is something labeled tenant storage, is that supposed to be temporary garbage places?
- **Representative (Smith) answered**, storage adjacent to the elevator would be for the garbage, but the other one would be for tenant bicycle storage, etc.
 - **Commissioner (Seepersaud) commented**, is there a service elevator that is in operation? Because it seems like the current storage proposal of storing garbage right next to an elevator and using the same elevator to take the garbage up and down that tenants will be using, seems disgusting.
- **Representative (Smith) replied**, there is no service elevator, the building is not big enough for that and would make the project unaffordable. Nearby University Lofts have the exact same situation where they have a central location for garbage with service elevators, a dumpster in a commercial alley, which gets collected by a private collector?
 - **Commissioner (Dziedzic) asked** about the status of the decommissioned elevator shaft that resides in the building.
- **Representative (Smith) replied**, it is believe that the existing shaft acted as the service elevator for the building at the time in the past. The elevator is no longer there and it does not go to the basement, it has been severely altered, filled with electric services and other things. It could be a possible garbage shoo possibly. The garbage would still have to go to the basement, but it would only need to come up 1 floor to be brought out as supposed to multiple floors before.

VOTING

MOTION that the Planning Commission intents to act as Lead Agency in SEQR review and that the action is Type II under SEQR, no further environmental review is required

FIRST: Corcoran	SECOND: Seepersaud	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):

MOTION to schedule a public hearing at 5:25 PM at the March regular meeting

FIRST: Corcoran	SECOND: Priest	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):

OTHER BUSINESS

MOTION: to alter the schedule to move up item Amenity Space Amendment ahead of Climate Action Plan

FIRST: Corcoran	SECOND: Seepersaud	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
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AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):
Title: Amenity space amendment		
DESCRIPTION: In 2023, there was a proposed legislation to prohibit basement party rooms, it worked well. There were couple projects that had to readjust their plans to get rid of the party rooms because of the legislation. It worked fine until someone found a loophole and attempted to propose very large storage rooms in a basement that will most likely going to be party rooms. The Building, Construction, and Code Enforcement department requested to amend the legislation to put specific occupancy limits on the different types of amenity spaces to prevent this issue. This amendment will certainly clarify the existing legislation.		
MOTION: to recommend the amendment as presented to the City Council		
FIRST: Dziedzic	SECOND: Seepersaud	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):

OTHER BUSINESS
<p>Title: Climate Action Plan</p> <p>DESCRIPTION: There is a new Green House Gas Inventory (GHGI) conducted based on 2022 data, to show what the city has achieved thus far. And used our city’s plans in comparison to the New York State plan to make sure what the city of Binghamton is doing tracks with what the state is doing. There is a timeline, original Climate Action Plan adopted by the city (in 1992) showed it wanted the city to have a 25% greenhouse gas reduction by 2025. GHGI showed a reduction of approximately 51.7% total for the government and little over 52% for the community side. All 3 objectives set for the plan were met, 3 of the actions that were not met are being replaced by things that will meet those action items. Transportation and land use objective have been met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buildings and Energy: Municipal buildings need to be more energy efficient, it is a work in progress at the present moment. ▪ Transportation and Urban Planning: goals have been met, but there are additional goals the city is looking forward to target and achieve. ▪ Waste management reduction and Recycling: recycling is a bit well established already, so the concept of “reuse” will be pushed for a lot more ▪ Local food, agriculture, and land uses: There are a lot of changes in this category ▪ There is a need to increase the inventory of electrical vehicles for city use – there are only 2 in the Planning Department. <p>Held two public meetings and had two tabling sessions over the summer, to obtain public input in climate action, furthermore there is a whole section on community outreach. There is an introduction to prevent/mitigate wildfires, for which we always had plan for the fire part, but not for the smoke.</p> <p>Recommended actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have net 0 carbon and energy efficient city facilities (producing energy as much as we use) - Support a net 0 carbon and energy efficient communities (applying for grants to make structure more energy efficient). City of Binghamton already runs on a 100% renewable energy purchased through Energy Credits. Currently there is a funding ability for low-moderate income residents to apply for energy efficiency upgrades (heating, cooling, appliances for different parts of houses). This will be achievable through grants and there is a lot of funding available through the state and more is coming to do just that. - Reduce transportation emissions through increasing in city walkability, electric vehicle charging station support, and providing municipal employee incentives to use alternative transportation. Reduce consumption for fuel for transportation of municipal government operations (increasing fleet of number of

electric vehicles). Garbage trucks, police cars, and fire trucks are very expensive to replace with electric vehicles.

- Goal is to support the expansion of urban farming and community gardening, want to build upon what is currently present (VINES)
- Potentially adopting an open space ordinance to allow for open space districts to be developed to preserve existing open space
- Commissioner (Dziedzic) commented, smart growth and complete streets translates to hostility to cars, often. Eliminating parking requirements may impede travel for city’s elderly population for whom walking and biking may not be a realistic option or for almost the whole general population during inclement weather. Some of the things listed under 2035 goals may make city of Binghamton an unfriendly car city and it is not something the general population living in the city has voted for. Requiring virtual meetings is a no go; in the future residents and constituents cannot come in person and have a say in a particular matter/project.
- Commissioner (Weiss) commented, when we are delving into transferring of increased electricity usage in different cities, we talk about the grid system – the grid itself does not just have to expand, it has to have backups and it must have a lot of cyber security, none of those things are mentioned in the presentation.
- Virtual meetings are for municipal purposes – where instead of a municipal employee driving for 10-15 mins for a meeting, they would rather do it virtually instead to save fuel costs. It is not necessarily meant for the public meetings to restrict them from coming to a public hearing, etc.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION to adjourn		TIME: 6:28 PM
FIRST: Dziedzic	SECOND: De Angelo	VOTE: Carried (7-0-0)
AYE(S): Dziedzic, Weiss, Corcoran, De Angelo, Seepersaud, DiFulvio, Priest	NAY(S):	ABSTENTION(S):