

**Minutes of Riverdale Park
Town Center Design Review Committee
December 7, 2005**

Committee members present:

Anne Marie Larson, chair
Pat Prangley, member
Orazio Puglisi, member
Vernon Archer, member
Alice Walker, member
J.D. Williams, member

Also present in an official capacity:

Dineene O'Connor, M-NCPPC staff liaison to committee

The meeting convened at 7:25 p.m.

Agenda Item 1– 4701 Queensbury Road

- Dineene O'Connor briefly summarized the application noting that the application met the development standards for land use, building height, architecture, and building openings. However, the application could not be approved since several items of information are outstanding.

A) Landscaping - A landscape plan was not provided in time to be reviewed for the scheduled meeting. It will be reviewed for the January meeting. However, the following additional information is necessary to enable a complete review: 1) pertinent to standard # 1 on page 44 of the plan– the ten-year tree canopy coverage calculation, which needs to be 10% of the gross site area needs to be noted on the landscape plan. 2) Hose bib locations need to be noted on the landscape plan. 3) A plant list according to appendix B (pages 81-90) of the Riverdale Park M-U-TC Plan needs to be provided as part of the landscape plan.

B) Streetscape - The landscape plan also needs to show appropriate dimensions and planting diagrams pertinent to Page 58, standard 2; Page 59, standard 2 under sidewalks and standard 3 under Landscaping and Pedestrian Amenity Zone as well as Page 60, standards 5, 6, 7 and 8 and Page 61, standards 10, 13 and 14.

C) Noise Mitigation - A detailed site plan will need to meet the design standards in accordance with the standards described on page 53 of the Plan.

C) Services, Utilities, and Stormwater Management - The detailed site plan needs to place utilities and HVAC units where they are not visible from the streets in accordance with the standards described on page 38 of the Plan.

E) Parking – The detailed site plan needs to be changed to show the new location for parking on the south side of the site. Fifteen parking spaces are 15 required; ten parking spaces including one handicapped space are provided. Thus, the departure remains for 4 parking spaces, which may be accommodated in the municipal parking lot located on the north side of Queensbury Road across the street from the site. If off-site shared parking is utilized in accordance with the off-site shared parking requirements, then the minimum required of off-street surface parking may be waived.

Standard 4, under Nonresidential Development, page 39 of the Plan addresses how the surface parking requirements may be waived. Where shared parking is utilized, the applicant shall provide details of the development's proposed uses and required parking. The applicant shall then demonstrate that the available shared parking is adequate to meet all or part of the parking needs of the proposed uses in addition to any other development being served by the shared parking lot. The applicant shall also provide information on the times when the uses operate so as to demonstrate the lack of potential conflict between multiple uses. The shared parking facility must be within a walking distance (no more than a quarter mile) to the primary entrances of all uses being served. Copies of this documentation must be presented to the Town of Riverdale Park, which will maintain copies of all shared parking documentation.

Information pertinent to a shared parking arrangement has not been received as part of the application.

- **The applicant's architect, Lisa Cohen, made a presentation of the proposed redevelopment at which time several suggestions from the community were made. Ms. Cohen indicated that the following suggestions would be reflected in an updated detailed site plan.**

The south side of the building was identified as being a significant focal point especially as one enters the historic core from Rhode Island Avenue coming north. Lisa Cohen agreed to enhance the south side elevation of the building with details such as the roofline cornice and extending the wood sideband along the south side to create a two-part building separation similar to the rest of the building.

- **It was also requested that the NOAA geodetic marker on the building not be destroyed, but retained.**
- Several residents requested that the architect make design decisions that highlight and improve upon the bookshop's architectural history as a trolley depot. Residents prefer that the trolley depot design elements be emphasized rather than deleted or de-emphasized. Generally, the proposed development is found to meet the intent of the architectural standards as expressed on page 47, and meets the standards pertinent to the historic core area per standard #2 (page 47), and standards 6, 7 and 8 (pages 48 and 49).
- **The applicants will make the necessary changes and reschedule for the January or February M-U-TC meeting.**

Agenda Item 2– Patriot Group - 4705 Queensbury Road, 4700 Riverdale Road, and 6103 Lafayette Avenue.

- Leith Wain of the Patriot Group made a presentation to the M-U-TC and the general public as part of a consultation prior to submitting a formal application. Generally they propose to develop 138 condominium residences in two 5-story buildings, which together include 8,000s.f. street level retail, with 155 garage parking spaces and 20 surface parking spaces. A number of questions were raised:
 - 1) Traffic - Citizens expressed concerns over traffic noting that traffic stacks up on Lafayette at Riverdale Road and Queensbury particularly at rush hour. Although the Patriot Group has not done traffic counts, the Town recently noted approximately 7500 vehicles both ways over the whole day and that Queensbury Road (eastbound) has 175 am peak hour trips and 475 pm peak hour trips; westbound = 436 am peak hour trips and 437 pm peak hour trips. Former Mayor Tiberio noted that the current level of traffic (7500) is a fraction of what it once was when the Town was home to several major employers. In those days (1960s and 1970s), traffic counts on Queensbury Road were between 12,000-18,000 cars a day.
 - 2) Parking - Residents expressed concern over parking, particularly for residents who live on Riverdale

Road. Residents said that permit parking might need to be implemented for neighbors to assure parking adjacent to their homes.-Residents added that the Town and Patriot Group should pursue agreements with the MARC train station parking lot regarding evening and weekend overflow parking for condominium residents and visitors. it was felt that the retail parking provided would be inadequate and hurt the potential for successful rental of the retail spaces as well as contribute to parking conflicts. If all the retail and commercial space in the entire Town Center were occupied, would the parking be adequate?

3)What will the affect of the EYA and the M Square development have on Riverdale Park municipal streets?

4) What is the for sale price of condo units projected to be? Ans - \$200K w/o land cost; with land cost factored in \$300K to \$400K for larger units. These costs are based on bringing the project to market in 3 ½ years. Residents strongly expressed a desire for high quality development that is marketed at a price at the upper end of Riverdale's real estate market.

5) What is the average size of a one-bedroom condo? Ans - 900 sf.

6) If interest rates rise and the market flattens out, what is the fall back position on condo versus rental? Ans – This project represents a \$27M investment; in that case, condos would be pulled back from sale and offered as rental units with estimated rents \$1200-1500 per month until such time that condo sales increase.

7) What did the Laurel Main Street redevelopment do for the City of Laurel?

8) The potential economic development to be generated for the Town of Riverdale Park is considerable and is part of the formula here.

9) The façade of the building needs to reflect the historic quality of the Town of Riverdale Park. Façade treatment was also pretty important -- people want the buildings to look like Riverdale Park, not Ballston.

10) Building height is a particularly key issue. People generally felt that the building height should be reduced by at least one story as a compromise to reflect the intent of the development standards in the historic core. However, others suggested specific measures such as step backs, dormers, and other treatments to reduce the visual mass of the buildings.

The Patriot Group will consider the issues raised prior to submitting a formal application to the Mixed-Use-Town Center Committee for review.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled committee meeting will be held Wednesday, January 4, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. in the Riverdale Park Town Hall if applications are received in a timely way (i.e. by December 23, 2005) that allows them to be put on the agenda.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

