

**ONEONTA, NEW YORK – OCTOBER 15, 2014- 7:00 P.M.  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION PG. 1**

**PRESENT:** Chair Dennis Finn  
Commissioner Gary Herzig  
Commissioner Anna Tomaino  
Commissioner Barry Holden  
Commissioner Edmond Overbey (left meeting 8:04 pm)  
Commissioner Becky Thomas  
Council Member Maureen Hennessy  
*Vacancy*

**ABSENT:** None

Chair Finn called the regular meeting to order and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

**MINUTES**

Chair Finn then asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting.

**MOTION**, made by Commissioner Herzig and seconded by Commissioner Tomaino that the commission approves the minutes of the regular meeting held September 17, 2014.

**Voting Ayes:** Commissioner Finn  
Commissioner Herzig  
Commissioner Tomaino  
Commissioner Holden  
Commissioner Overbey  
Commissioner Thomas

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** None

**MOTION CARRIED**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

Chair Finn opened consideration of the first agenda item.

1. James Phraner, 47 West Street 288.17-1-55  
Site Plan Review

The applicant would like to build a single-family dwelling on this vacant lot which also fronts on Clinton Street. The dwelling will be 2 stories and have 3 bedrooms. There is an existing driveway for this property located on Clinton Street.

The Notice of Public Hearing appeared in The Daily Star on October 10, 2014 and 40 letters were sent to adjoining property owners within a 300' radius of the property in question.

Chair Finn asked whether the applicant or representative was present. Mr. James Phraner, 27 Eastbrook Road, Walton, identified himself. Chair Finn noted that Mr. Phraner had come to the August meeting for a Sketch Plan Conference about his plans. Mr. Phraner briefly described his plans to build a single-family home on the site, which he plans to offer as a rental. The Chair asked whether anyone present had comments. Hearing none, he asked Code Enforcement Officer Chiappisi for his comments. The Code Enforcement Officer stated that Mr. Phraner had submitted plans drawn up by engineer Jim Forbes and that these plans were adequate in his opinion. According to CEO Chiappisi, Senior Engineering Technician Greg Mattice visited the site and expressed no concerns.

Commissioner Herzig asked the CEO if there were any Code concerns with the plan. Mr. Chiappisi indicated there were none.

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Chair Finn asked Mr. Phraner when he would like to start construction. Mr. Phraner indicated that he would like to begin within the next week. He noted that he has already contact DigSafe NY and has permits valid for the period 10/15-10/29/2014. In response to a question from Chair Finn, Mr. Phraner indicated the address would be 47 West Street, but automobile access would be from the existing parking area on Clinton Street at the rear of the proposed house; access to West Street would be via a stairway found on the submitted plans.

Chair Finn asked the Code Enforcement Officer whether a Short Environment Quality Review (SEQR) was needed. CEO Chiappisi stated that he had determined that this is a Type 2 Action and no SEQR is required.

**MOTION**, made by Commissioner Herzig and seconded by Commissioner Eastman, that the Commission approves the Site Plan for 47 West Street.

**Voting Ayes:** Commissioner Finn  
Commissioner Herzig  
Commissioner Tomaino  
Commissioner Holden  
Commissioner Overbey  
Commissioner Eastman

**Noes:** None

**Absent:** Commissioner Thomas

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chair Finn then moved to consideration of the second item on the agenda:

2. Michelle Estable 288.18-1-51  
72 Elm Street, **Site Plan Review**  
The applicant would like to demolish the garage located at the above referenced property and build a new garage in a different location.

The Notice of Public Hearing appeared in The Daily Star on October 10, 2014 and 40 letters were sent to adjoining property owners within a 300' radius of the property in question.

Chair Finn asked who was present to represent the applicant. Hearing no response, he deferred consideration of the Site Plan Review for 72 Elm Street until later in the meeting to allow the applicant or her representative to arrive.

Chair Finn then moved to consider the first of two Sketch Plan Conferences on the agenda.

3. Patrick Stanczyk (Housing Visions)  
Sketch Plan Conference  
The applicant intends to demolish all of the buildings on these lots. They will construct 1 townhouse and 2 buildings with 4 dwelling units in each.
- |                       |             |  |
|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| 23 Columbia Street    | 288.17-4-35 | R-4: Transitional Residential District |
| 25-27 Columbia Street | 288.17-4-34 | R-4: Transitional Residential District |
| 34 West Street        | 288.17-4-55 | MU-2: Gateway Mixed-Use District       |
| 38 West Street        | 288.17-4-32 | MU-2: Gateway Mixed-Use District       |

Commissioner Herzig stated that he would recuse himself from the discussion of Items 3 and 4 on the agenda. Commissioner Thomas indicated that she would recuse herself from discussion of Item 3.

Chair Finn asked who was present to discuss the proposal for 23 Columbia Street, 25-27 Columbia Street, 34 West Street and 38 West Street. Benton Lockwood of Housing Visions identified himself and also introduced Dan Cox of Passero Associates. Chair Finn asked Mr. Lockwood to summarize the project. He stated that the current plan calls for demolition of 5

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structures and construction of 1 single-family home and 2 4-unit apartment buildings. Mr. Cox presented sketch plans of the West and Columbia Street. He stated the new buildings would have off-street parking.

Chair Finn asked about the number of parking spaces and Mr. Cox indicated there would be 13. Chair Finn asked whether the properties would be managed by Housing Visions as one property and Mr. Cox indicated affirmatively. Chair Finn asked where the Housing Visions office would be located. Mr. Lockwood stated that the office would be at the proposed Silver Creek senior housing development.

CEO Chiappisi asked how many parking spaces would be required for the proposed residences. Mr. Cox indicated that 19 would be required and that Housing Visions would be requesting a waiver of the requirement.

Chair Finn asked whether the plan presented meets green space requirements. Mr. Cox stated that it does.

Commissioner Overbey noted that 10 units would probably house at least 20 persons and wondered where additional cars would park. Mr. Cox indicated that the likely location would be Columbia Street.

Chair Finn asked CEO Chiappisi whether there were any requirements for a recreation area.

The Code Enforcement Officer replied that OMC§300-75 stipulates that adequacy of useable space for recreation is a criterium that can be considered, but it is not a requirement.

Commissioner Overbey asked how it would affect the project cost to put the parking underneath the residences.

Mr. Lockwood responded that that would cause a host of problems. Commissioner Overbey reiterated his concern about the city's general lack of parking.

Commissioner Warren asked about the current status of these buildings. CEO Chiappisi replied that most have been vacant for at least 5 years.

Chair Finn asked for comments from the public. Robert Brzozowski, 43 Church Street, Ward 7 Council Member, recalled that last year, Housing Visions appeared to be interested in rehabilitation of housing to create owner-occupied residences. The plans before the Commission call for demolition of existing structures and construction of rental units. He stated his concern that vacant land may result if these projects are not completed. He stressed his preference for rehabilitation over demolition.

David Hutchison, 2 Irving Place, Environmental Board Chair, asked whether there are any provisions for energy efficiency, use of solar power. Mr. Lockwood replied that all appliances will meet Energy Star 3.0 standards. Mr. Hutchison also asked about landscaping and tree plans. Mr. Lockwood stated that they will emphasize native species, low maintenance and low water needs. Mr. Hutchison suggested use of some larger species, such as oaks and elms, and Mr. Lockwood agreed to consider these.

In reply to Council Member Brzozowski, Mr. Lockwood stated that the properties being considered for demolition are in rough shape. 23 Columbia has already been gutted.

Seth Clark, 23 Monroe Avenue, asked how many bedrooms would be in each unit, as that affects parking issues. Mr. Lockwood stated that there would be a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units. Mr. Clark asked about the market for these units. Mr. Lockwood stated that there would be income requirements and that Housing Visions' financing prohibits rental to full-time students. Mr. Clark asked what Housing Visions would like to do in future in the City. Mr. Lockwood stated that the main problem in the City are "Zombie" properties for which no owner can be

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determined. It will be imperative to act on foreclosures as they occur. He foresees a 30-year commitment to Oneonta.

Robert Stanton, 15 Church Street, asked if there were architect's sketches available. Mr. Lockwood indicated they should be available by next week. Mr. Stanton suggested that parking problems could be eased if the number of units was reduced. Mr. Lockwood replied that economics dictate the number of units, which also helps support employment for Housing Visions' employees in Oneonta.

Kay Stuligross, 10 Walnut Street, County Representative, asked whether the units would be affordable housing, whether there would be children and if so, would there be safe space for children. Mr. Cox stated that the front space is about 55 feet by 40 feet. Mr. Lockwood stated that income requirements would ensure that the tenants are low- and medium-income.

Chair Finn asked whether the Commissioners had additional questions. He asked how the residence at 36 West Street would be protected. Mr. Cox stated there would be either a solid fence or landscaping to block headlights and that the same would be true on Columbia.

Chair Finn asked whether there is a maximum building height and whether the development would be considered to be in MU-2 as it straddles two zones. CEO Chiappisi indicated that the most restrictive zone would apply. The proposed uses are allowed in both MU-2 and R-4 zones.

Concluding the discussion, Chair Finn asked that Housing Visions re-work parking if possible to increase the number of spaces. He would like them to pay attention to the neighbors' site & sound protection. Elevations and floor plans are needed. Mr. Cox stated that he expects site plans, landscaping and grading plans, floor plans and elevations to be submitted by October 29.

Chair Finn characterized the Commission's reaction as generally positive.

Chair Finn then moved to discuss the second Sketch Plan Conference:

4. Patrick Stanczyk (Housing Visions)  
Sketch Plan Conference

These lots are currently vacant. The applicant intends to build 1 building with 41 dwelling units in it and 8 row style single family townhouses.

R-3: High Density Residential District

1 Silver Avenue	288.17-1-21
3 Silver Avenue	288.17-1-22
5 Silver Avenue	288.17-1-23
9 Silver Avenue	288.17-1-25
11 Silver Ave.	288.17-1-26
13-15 Silver Avenue	288.17-1-27
Clinton Street	288.17-1-28.02

As the applicant for this and the previous conference are the same, Mr. Lockwood and Mr. Cox spoke on behalf of this application as well.

Chair Finn asked for a summary of the proposal. Mr. Cox stated that Housing Visions would like to build a 41-unit senior housing building and 2 4-unit townhomes on currently vacant land. They plan to stay away from the Silver Creek flood plain, realign the existing sanitary sewer and develop a required Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. NYS Dept of Environmental Conservation will monitor the site weekly during construction. Construction of an additional retention pond is proposed. Access will be from Monroe Avenue only. Mr. Lockwood indicated that Housing Visions is aware that improvements will be needed for Monroe Avenue,

Chair Finn asked whether anyone present had comments.

Mr. Seth Clark, 23 Monroe Avenue, expressed concern about traffic on Monroe Avenue and pointed out that for the past year, portions of Monroe Avenue have been only one lane wide. Mr.

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Cox indicated that the plan is to widen Monroe out to Clinton Street. He noted that the project includes 58 parking spaces. As senior housing, typically there would be 0.6 cars per unit. The potential residents do not do a lot of driving, so minimal traffic is expected.

Mr. Clark asked about the size of the catch basin. Mr. Cox indicated it had not yet been designed. Mr. Clark indicated that due to the location adjacent to Silver Creek, it needs to be very large, as Silver Creek has caused significant flooding problems in Center City.

Chair Finn indicated that a full environmental engineering study would be undertaken by Delaware Engineering.

Mr. Clark pointed out that this project is planned for a controversial area and the developers should know how large a catch basin is needed. Mr. Cox indicated they must plan for a 100 year flood.

Mr. Clark expressed concern that many trees would be cut on a site that helps maintain the water level. He asked whether downstream infrastructure will be examined.

Chair Finn indicated the study would do this and that historical evidence must be included.

7<sup>th</sup> Ward Council Member Robert Brzozowski, 43 Church Street, stated that given previous proposals for the site, residents are very sensitive to trees and topography. He wondered whether the topography would be significantly changed by the project. Mr. Lockwood stated that there would be a lot of cut-&-fill near the top of the hill. The lower 2/3 of the site will not be significantly changed. Mr. Cox stated that moving earth is expensive and therefore will be limited.

Charles King, 310 Chestnut Street asked a number of questions regarding age limits, building height, number of units and public transportation. Mr. Lockwood indicated that residents would be 62 or older; the building would be 3 stories with an elevator; and that talks have begun with the Mayor regarding extension of Oneonta Public Transit service to the site. He stated that there would be 40 units in the large building, 2 two-bedroom units and 38 one-bedroom units. There will be a community center and a property office.

Mr. Clark, 23 Monroe Avenue, asked whether there was only one access for emergency vehicles. Mr. Lockwood confirmed this; he said that a second access from Spruce Street had been considered but abandoned to maintain greenspace. Chair Finn stated that Oneonta Fire Department officials would be involved in review in the coming weeks.

Adam Curley, 35 Ford Avenue asked what the impact on taxes would be. Mr. Lockwood stated that Housing Visions would like to keep the taxes at the current level for the property and will be looking at a PILOT (payments in lieu of taxes) agreement based on the current value.

CEO Chiappisi stated that the map provided was based on 1977 FEMA maps and that the developers should use the current FEMA maps for the final plans.

Chair Finn thanked the applicants and expressed a generally positive reaction to the plans.

Chair Finn tabled the fourth item on the agenda, discussion of demolition permits with the Code Enforcement Officer.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Chair Finn again asked if anyone was present to on behalf of the applicant for the Site Plan Review for 72 Elm Street. Hearing no response and there being no further business to come before the commission, Chair Finn adjourned the regular meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.