



**Municipal Planning Commission
City Service Center – 915 Quarrier Street – Suite 6
Wednesday, April 5, 2023
3:00 P.M.**

Members Present

Aric Margolis, Chairman
Quintie Smith (via phone)
Adam Krason
Shawn Taylor
Cory Stout
Lisa Fischer-Casto
Alice Hypes
Shannon Ferrari
Terri Allen, Mayor's Designee

Members Absent

Margo Teeter
Deanna McKinney
Mary Beth Hoover
Terry Pickett
JoEllen Zacks
J.D. Stricklen, Kanawha Co. Rep
Justin Marlow

Staff Present

Dan Vriendt
Chad Webb

In Attendance:

Chuck Garvick
Councilwoman Beth Kerns (Ward 7)

1. Call to Order

2. Unfinished Business - None

3. New Business

Development of Significant Impact: Considering an application for a DSI at 1661 Washington Street West.

Chuck Garvick of 171 West Main Street, St. Clairsville, OH, site engineer for the aforementioned development presented his proposal to the commission. On behalf of Woda Cooper Companies they are proposing to construct a new 32-unit multi-family housing complex at the intersection of West Washington Street and Patrick Street. These would be an all 2-bedroom units so that they would be complete with a community room for its tenants, as well as a fitness and computer room. Amenities would include a playground, picnic area, shed and a dumpster area. There are 64 off-street parking spots proposed.

This building will be very similar to what is being constructed on Stockton Street by the same developer. The 3-story building will face West Washington Street. On the back side, it will be a 4-story building. It's a corridor elevator for its tenants. Each unit will open into a corridor within the building. There is no external access to the apartment units themselves. The parking spaces would be located off of Horns Avenue, the old Charleston Department Store site.

Aric Margolis said that the Mountain Mission property is next to the entrance and asked if that building comes close to the alley. Mr. Garvick said the Mountain Mission property does not come close to the alley. Aric asked Mr. Garvick if there was a vision field issue east on Horns. Mr. Garvick said there was no vision field issue.

Aric asked if there were any questions from the commission. There were no questions from the commission.

Chad presented the staff's review, analysis and recommendation. The staff recommends approval of this Development of Significant Impact. The necessity of the DSI arises when residential unit is be constructed more than 20 but let than 49 dwelling units. As previously stated, this development is going to include 32 2-bedroom units, 64 parking spaces and a total area of 1.437 acres. The property is being developed in a corridor village district. Overview of the submitted plans, in consideration of the zoning designation and the City Comprehensive Plan, indicates that this development is in the parameters of both the zoning designation and the City Comprehensive Plan.

The corridor village district's description and purpose show a focus on flexibility and redevelopment. With the closing of the Charleston Department having such a quick turnaround in the terms of redevelopment and increasing housing stock, conforms with that flexibility and desire for redevelopment. Based on the comprehensive map, it exists at the junction of a retail node and mixed-use district.

The staff is making this recommendation for approval, pending approval from City Engineering and other relevant City departments. As previously mentioned, according to the plans submitted, setbacks, parking and landscaping are in compliance with considerable work on stormwater removal.

Aric asked what the standard of review was for Development of Significant Impact. Dan Vriendt responded that the use of the property is permitted use. It could be described as a puzzle where you are reviewing how the pieces of the puzzle are put together. You cannot deny the puzzle, but you can rearrange the pieces. Aric said he had a question before on a similar project. The one thing Aric said that bothers him about the design, as it is shown, is that it is another project whether the building is going to turn its back on the primary street. The back faces Washington Street. Would it be with the

commission's ability to state that the building should have a prominent entry that faces the main street. Dan said that was within the committee's purview.

Aric also had a question concerning the notation on the site plan of a 16' maximum setback. Aric said that everything on Washington Street is street front and this complex would be back 13'. That will change the presence along Washington Street. Dan said the townhouse on the other side of Patrick Street sets backs. Aric said it looks like there is one other building that will remain on Washington Street until you hit the next street. Dan said the proposed complex is much taller than the other buildings and the fact it sets back a little more does not bother him as much. Adam Krason said that some of the entry element out closer to the road and have a one-story entry element. Aric agrees with Adam's comment. There does not appear to be anything attaching the building to Washington Street. Dan said this is similar to what the commission required of Kanawha Charleston Housing on Patrick Street too. I believe have doors facing Patrick Street as well and that was a requirement of the Planning Commission. Dan said what Aric and Adam have proposed is consistent with what the Commission recommended in the past.

Aric said the downhill side is that they are proposing to build half a story and then a retaining wall. Adam said the only door facing Washington Street is out of the emergency stairwell.

Mr. Garvick said he does not have the elevations with him to see what that front looks like at Washington Street. He will try to get those by pdf shortly. The second floor would be the same level as West Washington. There is access from the second level to West Washington. Aric said that it was not a prominent entrance, but it does not mean something could not be done. Adam said if the second floor is level with Washington Street, there is no reason there could not be a prominent entry from both sides, one that faces the major road and one that faces the parking area for convenience of the residents. Adam said that makes it more appropriate for the community and the residents.

Dan asked if there was an issue with floor heights and Washington Street? Mr. Garvick said that what he is referring to is the second level is accessible to the West Washington sidewalk. Aric asked if the windows were normal height. Mr. Garvick said the windows are normal height. Adam says it is an easy fix and something that could be accommodated in the design.

Aric said that another part of their purview is looking at how the entrance and exits are to the site, i.e., whether access from the alley is appropriate, should there be an entrance off Patrick Street. Those are issues that this commission can review and vote on if necessary. It is not just the building itself. It is all the circulation and how it works.

Aric asked if there were any further questions for the staff. There were no further questions.

Aric asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the application. There was no one present to speak in favor of the application.

Aric asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition to the application.

City Councilwoman Beth Kerns for Ward 7 had questions concerning the DSI. Ms. Kerns asked if this was low-income or government subsidized housing. Aric responded that the questions Ms. Kerns asked are not part of the Municipal Planning Commission's review process. Ms. Kerns said it is a concern of the west side residents, because there are a number of low-income housing complexes being built in that area.

Dan responded that housing is a permitted use in this zoning district, so the commission cannot deny the request based on whether it is low-income, moderate-income, etc. Ms. Kerns asked if they are allowed to know this information. It is not information that enters into the Planning Commission's decision-making process. Dan said if you want to talk to the developer outside the meeting, that would be completely appropriate.

Mr. Garvick stated again that he is the site engineer, not the building architect. After conferring with Ms. Little, she is with the owner and developer, we will commit to making a covered entrance at that location as requested. It will not be a public entrance, because the office is off the parking lot in the back where the tenants enter and exist. Security is an issue for that reason. It will probably be a key fob entrance. Aric said that the concern is more that it has a front door, not just covered, but a substantial front entrance. Dan said the door should be centered in the facade and not appearing to be a secondary door at the end of the façade.

Adam said that when DSI plans have been reviewed in in the past, they have seen elevations of the building. All the commission has to review today is a site plan. Is it uncommon to be able to review the elevations of the buildings. Dan said that request can be made.

Aric said he would not personally require the door to be centered, because they could do something nice to bring that out. A statement can be made without being centered. Aric said he would not put that in the record.

Note and Vote: Adam Krason made a motion to table the DSI at 1661 Washington Street West and request the additional information. The motion was seconded by Cory Stout and passed unanimously by a vote of 9-0.

4. Minutes of the January 4, 2023 MPC meeting

Mote and Vote: Adam Krason made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2023 meeting. The motion was seconded by Lisa Fischer-Casto and passed unanimously by a vote of 9-0.

5. Announcements

6. Presentation of Planning Department's 2022 Annual Report by Lori Brannon

7. Adjournment