DESIGN AND PROJECT REVIEW COMMITTEE (DAPR) MINUTES
September 11, 2019


Staff Present: M. Rivera

Others Present:

Presiding Member: S. Mangum

A quorum being present, S. Mangum called the meeting to order at 2:34 pm.

Old Business

2503 Eastwood Avenue  
 Recommendation to ZBA
St. Athanasius Parish, applicant, submits to amend their Special Use permit to expand their staff parking lot from 14 to 26 parking spaces, in the R1 Single-Family Residential District.

APPLICATION PRESENTED BY: Mike Kritzman, The Lakota Group

DISCUSSION:

- Applicant stated that supplemental information regarding site circulation was submitted and that the future play area was removed from the proposal. The circulation primarily utilizes the alley to enter the main parking lot where a central loading area is sectioned off during peak periods.
- L. Biggs stated that the neighbors have long-time concerns with traffic and congestion. The proposal appears to make these concerns more problematic.
- Applicant explained that the plans primary concern is improving play area conditions by removing as much parking as possible from the north lot. However, removing staff parking from the north lot would help create more capacity for faster turnover of short-term parking during peak periods.
- L. Biggs disagreed saying that the fundamental problem with the circulation is that it’s forced through the alley. Moving staff parking south doesn’t help alleviate the conflicts that exist.
- M. Griffith asked if the remaining staff parking in the north lot could move to the courtyard area.
- Applicant explained that this area was used for active play and parking was prohibited.
- L. Biggs asked why the parking from the north lot needed to be relocated.
- Applicant stated that the plan isn’t about capacity, it’s about maximizing open-space and play areas for students.
- M. Rivera asked if the circulation pattern could be reversed, where vehicles would enter the alley from the north and exit to the south. This would theoretically improve conflicts with the alley facing garages.
- M. Griffith expressed that the site needed to be used more efficiently and would like to see a comprehensive study on the campus to effectively provide for parking and play areas. The current composition is dysfunctional and the proposal doesn’t help.
L. Biggs expressed that all the parking should be in one location and requested additional data on the number of cars at peak hours and who utilizes the lots during school hours.

The applicant explained that 30 to 40 staff members utilize parking and that additional 30-40 vehicles arrive during peak drop-off while 20 families use alternative transportation. The remaining families either utilize on-street or other parking areas.

L. Biggs stated that the problem is most likely more acute during afternoon pick-up rather than drop-off and would like to see data reflecting pick-up times.

The applicant agreed about afternoon pick-up comments and explained that the Parish is looking for efficiency, but has access issues which are difficult to address.

L. Biggs stated that the proposal makes the current issues worse rather than finding ways to mitigate them.

S. Mangum stated that the main problem is primary stacking takes place in the alley.

L. Biggs stated that the stacking and loading used to occur in the street and was moved to the alley in the hopes of providing efficiencies. The problem has not improved, and needs a master plan, rather than small interventions.

C. Sterling expressed concern with the long-term impact the institutional land use has had on the fabric of the neighborhood and noted that in the last decade two single-family homes were demolished, weakening the street edge along Eastwood Avenue.

The applicant stated that the home demolished was dilapidated.

C. Sterling questioned the need for the homes to be demolished and whether parking was an appropriate use on the subject property.

The applicant explained that there is no intention to pave more areas in the future and the proposal has nothing to do with leasing spaces for Northwestern events.

S. Mangum reiterated that this is a difficult site and the issues are not atypical for schools where vehicle drop-off is the predominant transportation mode, especially a private neighborhood school without a dedicated catchment area. The design for 2503 Eastwood is sensitive to the neighbors with a 27-foot setback, landscaping, and limited impervious surface by using the alleys as drive aisles.

C. Sterling agreed that the 2503 Eastwood design was adequate if it was looked at in isolation.

M. Griffith stated that he was not comfortable recommending approval and wants to see a larger campus planning effort before additional parking is constructed.

J. Hyink stated that the need for the proposed parking was not identified and the applicant should take a comprehensive approach to the design of the campus.

L. Biggs concurred that a holistic approach would be more appropriate. Use the existing parking lot as a parking lot and the existing open space as open space.

J. Hyink stated a campus master plan is needed.

The applicant stated that this is phase 1 of a bigger vision.

L. Biggs stated that if there was a bigger vision, that’s what needs to be presented in order to make a recommendation on whether phase 1 is appropriate. The goals are good goals, but the proposal doesn’t accomplish those goals in an adequate way.

Public Comment:

Kelsey Davies, neighbor, stated that the main parking lot is typically vacant and there is no need for additional parking. She reiterated that because of the Parish, the neighborhood has lost two single-family homes. There is concern that they’ll want to buy the last remaining home and tear it down as well.
• Kelsey Davies, neighbor, is concerned that the real reason for more parking is to lease spaces to Northwestern to accommodate professional sports. There is a lot of money to be made.
• Betsy Baer, neighbor, stated that this used to be a lovely neighborhood
• The applicant stated that the Parish would welcome negotiations with neighbors to address their concerns regarding Northwestern.
• Susan Baily, neighbor, stated that she often cannot get out of her driveway in the afternoon and that she struggles to understand why parking can’t stay in the main lot and the 2503 Eastwood lot could become a play area.
• Kelsey Davies, stated that she would like to see all of the campus issues addressed at one time or at least with one plan.

L. Biggs made a motion to recommend denial to ZBA, seconded by J. Hyink.

The Committee voted, 8-1, to recommend denial to ZBA.

New Business
1570 Oak Avenue/1555 Ridge Avenue Recommendation to ZBA
Oak Ridge Property Evanston, LLC., applicant, submits for Major Variation to locate required off-street parking for 1570 Oak Avenue at 1800 Maple Avenue, Maple Avenue Self Park garage, a location more than 1,000 feet away, in the R6 General Residential District.

APPLICATION PRESENTED BY: Al Belmonte, applicant

DISCUSSION:
• Applicant stated the parking for their apartment building at 1570 Oak Avenue is located at 1555 Ridge Avenue; they are proposing to locate their parking to the Maple Avenue parking garage. The parking lot at 1555 Ridge Avenue is used by residents at 1570 Oak Avenue and by others who do not live there, including Post Office employees. The parking demand has decreased below the lot’s capacity over the past several years so they have leased spaces to others.
• Applicant stated 32 residents of 1570 Oak Avenue use the parking lot, 34 users are non-residents in their building.
• Applicant proposes to lease parking spaces at the City’s Maple Avenue parking garage.
• M. Rivera stated there is capacity at that garage to lease spaces. He stated the spaces will be leased at market rate.
• S. Mangum stated it should be a long term lease, at least 5 years.
• I. Eckersberg asked if the parking was being relocated to allow for development.
• Applicant stated yes, the property at 1555 Ridge is under contract to be sold subject to the variation approval.
• S. Mangum asked if there is bike storage in the building.
• Applicant stated yes, there is a bike room.
• J. Hyink asked if the room is dedicated to bike storage.
• Applicant stated yes.
• S. Mangum reminded the applicant that DAPR is a recommending body, the final determination rests with the City Council.

M. Griffith made a motion to recommend approval to ZBA, seconded by J. Hyink.
The Committee voted, 9-0, to recommend approval to ZBA.

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**Adjournment**

J. Hyink made a motion to adjourn, seconded by M. Jones. The Committee voted, 9-0, to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 3:32 pm.

The next DAPR meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 2:30 pm in Room 2404 of the Lorraine H. Morton Civic Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Griffith