

MINUTES
MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD
City Commission Room, City Hall
1101 Poyntz Avenue
November 2, 2009
7:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Meredith, Chairperson; Jerry Reynard, Vice-Chair; Linda Morse; Mike Hill; Stephanie Rolley; Nikki Miller

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Kratochvil.

YOUTH IN GOVERNMENT: none

STAFF PRESENT: Eric Cattell, Assistant Director for Planning; Steve Zilkie, Senior Planner; Lance Evans, Senior Planner; Cam Moeller, Planner II; Chad Bunger, Planner II; and Rob Ott, City Engineer.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one spoke.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE October 19, 2009, MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD MEETING.

Jerry Reynard moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda. Stephanie Rolley seconded the motion, which passed on a vote of 6-0.

GENERAL AGENDA

CONTINUATION OF A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE REZONING OF THE PROPOSED FLINTHILLS HOSPITALITY COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) FROM R, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, AND R-1, SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT, TO PUD, COMMERCIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT. THE SITE IS AN APPROXIMATE 4.8 ACRE TRACT OF LAND, GENERALLY LOCATED 400 FEET WEST OF THE INTERSECTION OF SETH CHILD ROAD AND ALLISON AVENUE, ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF ALLISON AVENUE AND SOUTH OF THE FT. RILEY BOULEVARD OFF-RAMP. (OWNER: K-AIR INC./APPLICANT: FLINTHILLS HOSPITALITY, LLC – COLIN NOBLE) (This item was tabled on October 19, 2009, by the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board to the November 2, 2009, Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board meeting.)

Reynard moved that the Board remove the item from the table. Miller seconded the motion, which passed with a vote of 6-0.

Zilkie presented the staff report, recommending approval with twelve (12) conditions.

Ott presented additional information about the proposed PUD's impact on traffic conditions along Allison Road, based on a traffic count taken by the City between October 5, 2009 and October 8, 2009. He indicated the existing condition of Allison Avenue is a Level of Service B, and that with the anticipated increase in vehicles per day from the development it Level of Service would remain unchanged for a two lane road.

Rolley asked Ott about the total anticipated traffic volumes along Allison Avenue with the inclusion of the PUD proposal, and about whether there were plans to widen Allison Avenue in the future to accommodate the anticipated traffic increase.

Ott indicated that the evening peak volumes would increase from 250 to 350 vehicles; however there were no plans to widen Allison Avenue as there was no demonstrated need to do so based on the level of service standards.

Miller asked Ott whether traffic patterns along Allison Avenue would be different on the weekend than during the week.

Ott stated that traffic patterns would be different on Saturday and Sunday than during the week, and that generally traffic would be lighter, and would be less clustered around peak hours. He explained that this is why weekday peak hours were used to compute the traffic impact of the proposed use at the subject site. He told Miller that the applicant would be able to provide further information on the traffic study and if the hotels would have higher volumes on weekends.

Morse asked about storm drainage for the parking lot between the hotels; whether parking for the hotels would result in an increase in on-street parking along Allison Avenue, as she didn't want employees parking off site; and, whether there were any plans to make any changes to the "No Parking" signs along Allison Avenue.

Ott stated that there may be a need for more parking lot inlets to keep water from standing in the parking lot; however the proposed storm water improvements incorporate underground detention that would ensure that the post development rate of runoff would not increase. He said that the applicant would be able to provide additional information about those proposed improvements.

Zilkie indicated the proposal met the minimum off-street parking standards for the two hotels and that there were no other activities in the proposal that would generate additional parking demand. He stated that the proposal maximized parking on the subject site and likely would not result in additional on-street parking on Allison Avenue.

Mores asked if there would be a stop sign at the PUD's exit drive. Ott indicated that the

applicant can place a stop sign there.

Meredith opened the public hearing.

Gary Schooley, Landscape Architect - Schwab-Eaton Engineering, representing the applicant, provided additional information on the proposal and stated that the location of the site made it suitable for a commercial use. He said the proposal would be an economic benefit to the City and neighborhood. He said they improved the screening along Allison Avenue which consisted of two species of evergreen trees to be planted at 6 to 8 feet in height, and would grow to 25 to 40 feet at maturity. He indicated the proposed parking would accommodate employees and guests. He said Candlewood Suites is an extended stay hotel that would likely be occupied by construction workers and have earlier morning and evening traffic peaks than normal. Holiday Inn Express was for overnight stays and would have 8 am to 10 am peaks, and later evening peaks. Although he said there will be some overlap with ambient traffic flow peaks. He said the hotels would have 60 per cent occupancy most of the time and typically one car per room.

Miller asked whether traffic was anticipated to be higher on weekdays or weekends.

Schooley stated that it was anticipated to have less traffic volume on weekends, except for game weekends.

Morse asked whether there would be a stop sign at the exit of the proposed development.

Schooley responded that there would be a stop sign.

Dee Baird, 2719 Allison Avenue, showed photos of the area around the site and spoke in opposition to the request. She was concerned about the steepness of Allison Avenue, that the proposed PUD has only one entrance-exit unlike the other hotels in town, and that there was a school bus stop on Allison Avenue. She was concerned about 24-hour noise, light and traffic, and stated the proposal was not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. She said a motor home or trailer would take up more than one parking stall, and asked that "no parking" be placed on Allison Avenue. She asked Ott to provide additional information on the traffic study.

Ott indicated the city's traffic count generated data similar to the study she had submitted and that it included traffic from Ridgewood Drive

Baird expressed additional concerns, including the lack of turn-lanes into the development, impact on water pressure, and alternatives to the current proposal that had been given by the applicant at a neighborhood meeting. She was concerned about snow removal and street maintenance once the hotels go in.

Ott clarified that the new traffic volumes resulting from the proposal were below the thresholds for a turn lane into the site. He said the proposal would not affect water pressure in the surrounding neighborhood.

Baird said she was not opposed to the hotels, but she did not want to see it in her neighborhood. She presented the Board with a petition requesting denial of the applicant's proposal, signed by a number of residents in the neighborhood.

Roy Head, 228 Ridgewood Drive, asked whether the PUD entrance was still proposed across from Ridgewood Drive.

Ott explained that it was still in that location because it needs to be lined up with Ridgewood Drive.

Head expressed concerns about existing traffic conditions along Allison Avenue, motorists' failure to stop at the existing stop sign, poor maintenance along Allison Avenue, and snow and ice removal on area roads during the winter. He said hotel guests won't be used to the school bus stops on Allison Avenue and asked where the dumpsters were located and the setback of the hotels from Fort Riley Boulevard.

Christine McCurry, 712 Ridgewood Drive, showed photos and expressed concern regarding traffic on Allison Avenue, stating that there was a blind spot created by the topography, and contended that the applicant's proposal would exacerbate already unsafe conditions there.

Beth Montelone, 730A Ridgewood Drive, expressed concerns about snow and ice removal along Allison Avenue, and the blind spots and that hotel guests will not be aware of them.

Richard Lewis, 725 Canyon Drive, expressed concern that the proposal adversely affects properties beyond the area that was given notice. He also expressed concerns about the steep hill on Allison Avenue, and that the proposal had only one entrance unlike other commercial sites. He suggested an entrance to the site off K-18 and that the proposal should be put somewhere else.

Richard Hill, 3515 Stagecoach Circle, indicated he owns properties in the area along Allison Avenue, Dondee Drive, Stagg Hill Road and Davis Drive. He spoke in favor of the proposal indicating that a hotel use would be an appropriate transition between the highway and the neighborhood. If the site is not developed for hotels, it will be developed with apartments and duplexes which would have higher traffic volumes. He said it is a hard site to work with, and that the proposal is a good looking project that will be well maintained.

Joyce Birte, 1217 Colorado Street, spoke against the proposal, citing traffic concerns. She asked the applicant whether the proposed hotels would contain meeting rooms.

Colin Noble, applicant, said there were no meeting rooms in Candlewood Suites and only a small board room in the Holiday Inn.

Angela Preston, 708 Allison Avenue, spoke against the request, citing the hill along Allison Avenue and the hazardous entrance location, potential conflicts between traffic

generated by the hotels with pedestrian activity in the residential portion of the neighborhood, and icy conditions in the winter with no good alternative route. She said Seth Child Road already backs up at peak hours between the traffic light and the stop sign. She asked how hotels insure they meet their target market for extended stay.

John Ring, 905 Allison Avenue, spoke against the request, stating that the use would not be appropriate in the established neighborhood. He said safety was the biggest issue and expressed concern about delivery trucks trying to enter the site. He said and the trees were trying hide what doesn't fit.

Schooley provided information on the three neighborhood meetings that had been held by the applicants about the proposal. He explained the notification boundaries used for each meeting (500 feet for the first and second meetings and 750 feet for the third meeting) and listed concerns raised by neighbors in attendance regarding safety and traffic. He stated that many of the concerns had to do with existing conditions on Allison Avenue, and not with the proposal. He read into the record an email he had received from Allyn Moore, P.E. who was in favor of the applicant's proposal that was included in the Planning Board's meeting packet.

Richard Lewis, expressed disagreement with some of the findings from the traffic study presented Ott and noted traffic speeds of some cars at 50-60 mph.

Mr. Opheim, 732 Ridgewood Drive, expressed concern about traffic safety with the hill on Allison Avenue and said that game-day traffic will be more congested. He said the applicants should relocate the project to somewhere else, as no one in the neighborhood supports it.

John Ring also expressed concerns that hotel guests will not know about the blind spot on Allison Avenue. He suggested asking John Mayberry at USD 383 what his bus drivers think about the project.

Richard Hill stated that the site was developable land that would some day be improved for some use. Traffic from other uses would likely be greater than from the hotels. He said it was a common issue that neighbors want to see land next to them remain vacant. He said the site would not remain vacant permanently, and that the neighborhood would eventually have to accept some form of development there. He said issues need to be addressed; however the hotels were the best use for the site.

Karen Potts, 920 Allison Avenue, presented concerns about traffic safety, and expressed her preference for duplexes on the site instead of the proposed hotels.

Mr. Opheim expressed concern about truck traffic associated with the applicant's proposal.

The Planning Board took a five minute recess.

With no one else wishing to speak, Meredith closed the Public Hearing.

Morse expressed concerns with off-street parking for the proposed hotels and asked whether it was possible for the Planning Board to require no parking on Allison Avenue as a condition of approval for the proposed rezoning.

Ott explained that expanding no parking to both sides of Allison Avenue, if not currently so restricted, would require adoption of an ordinance by the City Commission. He said there may need to be a greater number of no parking signs on the existing restricted portion of the street.

Morse asked about pedestrian and vehicle circulation on the site and the dumpster location.

Zilkie explained the pedestrian routes within the PUD that would connect to the proposed sidewalk on Allison Avenue. He said City Administration was recommending the applicants extend the sidewalk to the existing sidewalk at the bottom of the hill at Seth Child Road. He explained the need for the travel easement to provide vehicular access to the pump station. Zilkie explained that the location of the trash enclosure would be 14-feet below Allison Avenue and screened by the trees and retaining wall which would muffle sound.

Rolley asked about emergency access and the long cul-de-sac length.

Zilkie explained how emergency access would be handled and that the Fire Department had reviewed and approved the proposal because both hotels would include fire sprinklers and provide the required fire hydrants.

Zilkie pointed out that the traffic report submitted by the applicant's engineer included a sight distance study of the hill on Allison Avenue.

Reynard stated that he considered the proposed hotels to be the highest and best use of the land and the PUD adds value to the site. However, he had concern about the speed of some cars traveling 65 mph on Allison Avenue, which was a hazard. He didn't know if adding the proposed development to the existing traffic would create a worse situation; however, the neighborhood knows about the blind spot, and hotel guests would not. He indicated he could not support the applicant's proposal.

Hill stated the location of the PUD site being near a major highway intersection of Fort Riley Boulevard and Seth Child Road made it suitable for commercial use, and not suitable for a residential use. He said they try to encourage good infill development, and that the site plan works well and was laid out in a way that was sensitive to and minimized impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. He noted that the proposal meets the twelve zoning standards. He echoed concerns about traffic safety and speeders, however said that you can't deny the proposal based on someone that speeds. He said those concerns were minor enough for him to still support the request.

Miller stated that it was the function of the Board to protect the health, safety and general

welfare of the public, and for that reason, she could not support the applicant's proposal.

Rolley contended that many of the safety concerns raised in the public hearing had to do with existing conditions along Allison Avenue and not the proposed hotels. She said the City ought to do something to address those existing issues of speeders and people running the stop sign, as well as maintenance of the street. The hotels were not making these existing conditions worse. She said they need to look at the best use of this site that will be marketable. She indicated she could support the proposal because it represented a good solution for the site.

Morse stated that although she supported the idea of infill projects in general, she could not support this project. She said the Comprehensive Plan was subject to interpretation, and that while it could be seen to indicate that the proposal was suitable, it could also be interpreted that the proposal is not suitable. She expressed her preference for a development that does not have to be squeezed on the site and that maybe it could be redesigned with one hotel that would be workable. She said the sidewalk on Allison Avenue would be necessary. She was concerned about only one access point for emergency access and stated that she was not going to be able to support the applicant's request.

Meredith stated that traffic speeds were an enforcement issue and not caused by the hotels and that street maintenance would need to be addressed. However, his previous concerns about traffic, lighting, and landscaping have been resolved. He said for him, the neighborhood that the site is located in is the whole interchange area, and indicated his support of the proposal.

Morse stated that if the Planning Board was inclined to recommend approval of the request, they ought to recommend that the City Commission pass an ordinance forbidding parking on both sides of Allison Avenue.

Rolley asked whether it would be possible for the Planning Board to include a recommendation for additional no-parking signs along Allison Avenue.

Ott provided information on no parking signage.

Rolley moved that the Planning Board recommend approval of the rezoning of the proposed Flinthills Hospitality Commercial Planned Unit Development (PUD) from R, Single-Family Residential District, and R-1, Single-Family Residential District, to PUD, Commercial Planned Unit Development District, based on the findings in the Staff Report with twelve (12) conditions of approval recommended by City Administration, and with a recommendation to the City Commission that parking not be allowed on either side of Allison Avenue and that the street is signed appropriately.

Hill seconded the motion, which failed, on a vote of 3 to 3, with Rolley, Hill and Meredith voting in favor of the motion, and Reynard, Morse, and Miller voting in opposition.

Zilkie explained that a tied vote is a failure to make a recommendation, which has the same effect as a recommendation of denial. Zilkie said the Board has alternatives including continuing the item. Cattell indicated that the applicant could proceed to the City Commission with no specific recommendation from the Board, which has the same effect as a recommendation of denial.

Hill expressed his view that issues raised by Planning Board members that voted in opposition were not so much concerned with the project, as with existing traffic and street configuration issues that could not be addressed by the applicant in a revised proposal that would result in changed votes by the Board.

Miller stated that she had concerns beyond what the developer could address. To change her vote, she would like to see that traffic is addressed somehow, and she had concerns with how the road is being maintained. She was concerned that the City was not planning to make changes to Allison Avenue, or to be more proactive in addressing these issues when the development would increase traffic volumes, which was the basis for her opposition.

REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

There were no reports or comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Antonini, Planning Intern