

# MINUTES

## MANHATTAN URBAN AREA PLANNING BOARD

City Commission Room, City Hall  
1101 Poyntz Avenue

**June 17, 2019**

### MEMBERS PRESENT

Ken Ebert, *chair*  
Phil Anderson  
John Ball  
Debbie Nuss

Jerry Reynard, *vice-chair*  
Gary Stith

### MEMBERS ABSENT

Neil Parikh

### STAFF PRESENT

Chad Bunger, Asst. Community Development Director; Barry Beagle, Senior Planner; Shauna Laauwe, Planner II; Ben Chmiel, Planner II

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

- 1.1. Ebert called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Staff called roll and stated there was a quorum.
- 1.2. Open Public Comments: there were none.

### 2. CONSENT AGENDA

- 2.1 Approve the minutes of the May 20, 2019, Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board meeting
- 2.2 Consider the final plat of Elijah Addition, a 10.6-acre, 26-lot, single- and multiple-family subdivision northwest of the intersection of Chapel Hill Road and Victory Drive (*Applicant: Burton Land Co. & Fortress; file no. SUB-19-026*)

**Stith moved that the Board approve the Consent Agenda; Reynard seconded. Motion passed 6–0–0 on the final plat and 5–0–1 on the minutes, Anderson abstaining.**

### 3. GENERAL AGENDA

- 3.1. A public hearing to consider a Municipal Facility Review request to install a parking lot for Woodrow Wilson Elementary School at the northwest corner of North 9th Street and Osage Street (*Applicant: USD 383; file no. MFC-19-040*)

Laauwe presented the staff report. City Administration recommended approval of the proposed off-site parking lot for Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, with three conditions of approval.

Stith requested to know whether the architect had indicated what type of material would be used for the fencing of the proposed parking lot. Laauwe was unsure but believes cedar would be used. Stith also inquired whether there would be handicap parking on the off-site parking lot. According to proposed plans, handicap parking would stay on-site to properly benefit those with disabilities. Ebert wanted to clarify that according to the drawings, cedar would likely be used but there remains the desire to bid on other composite materials. Anderson inquired about how much tax revenue the city would lose out of if they approve the lot instead of building a residential unit. Laauwe said she did not have those figures. Anderson also questioned whether steel posts should be utilized for corner posts instead of the proposed 4x4 or 6x6 posts. Ebert mentioned he had calculated the tax loss to be at least \$3000, considering the most recent assessment of the previous property that had been in unkempt condition.

Ebert opened the public hearing.

Heather Peterson, 103 South 4th Street, architect and applicant, said she understands that the proposed plans go against the zoning regulations of the area, therefore they attempted to go above and beyond in design and landscaping to ensure the parking lot is as pleasant as possible. Ebert asked whether Peterson was asked to review the on-site parking as well as the proposed lot. She was not.

Eric Reid, Assistant Superintendent, USD 383, 2031 Poyntz Avenue, cited a need for parking across the district. He said during early reviews of their bond project, staff and constituents requested better parking accommodations. During the bond process, the lot at 600 Osage Street was unavailable, therefore, their initial plans for parking were only applied to the Woodrow Wilson site. The bond entailed removing the temporary building that is on-site and replacing it with a storm shelter and relocating parts of the playground to make room for more parking. This would have the effect of encroaching upon the playground, which is an unpopular decision but the only way they could at the time. When the lot at 600 Osage Street was available for purchase, the District purchased in an attempt to establish more parking spaces for teachers, faculty, and staff. The cost of purchasing and developing the lot would save the District approximately \$20,000 compared to relocating parts of the playground and expanding parking on-site.

Anderson asked if a majority of staff at Woodrow Wilson live far enough away they are required to drive a personal vehicle or utilize public transportation. Reid responded that most of the teachers who work at Woodrow Wilson live too far to easily walk to work.

Nuss questioned how the establishment of the new Blue Township school and redistricting would impact the enrollment of students at Woodrow Wilson. Reid predicted that more students would probably be bussed into Bluemont Elementary and Woodrow Wilson. Nuss asked whether there was any analysis to determine whether the present on-site space could be reconfigured to accommodate more vehicles. Reid said in the initial bond plans, the current on-site parking would be redone to accommodate more vehicles but would likely encroach upon the playground.

Ebert asked, if the lot had not become available or if the City Commission refuses approval, would the district still attempt to provide additional off-street parking. Reid cited voters and constituents were very vocal about addressing issues. Reid acknowledged that parking will never be fixed, but the issue can be alleviated. He said the district has been weighing

how important playground space and parking spaces are. He said they would prefer to not reduce playground space while also establishing more parking. Ebert asked how the District weighed the public interest of adding parking, encroachment on a residential area, and encroaching upon the playground. The campus is set on a rectangular city block, therefore space is finite. Reid said while parking is important, the ultimate desire is to not disrupt playground space that students need.

Chad Moreau, 421 Leavenworth Street, acknowledged that there is a parking issue at the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, but the lot of 600 Osage Street is too valuable to turn into a parking lot. With a close proximity to downtown, City Park, the mall, Civic Plus, the Discovery Center, et cetera, there is too much to lose by building a parking lot instead of a lot that could be utilized for building a home. Moreau proposed a plan that would be closer to the nearest entrance, produce nearly as many parking stalls, and would be cheaper than the district's current off-site parking plans. The plan includes utilizing angled parking to establish 42 stalls without shrinking playground space. This plan would keep teachers closer to the school and control the flow of traffic within the teacher parking. Anderson asked for clarification on how the traffic would flow through the parking lot. Laauwe said Moreau's plan has been submitted to the City Engineer and determined that this plan is possible with the removal of the temporary building on-site. This plan would result in a total of 42 stalls.

John Adam, 405 North 5th Street, asked the board to recommend denial of the proposed plan to build a parking lot on 600 Osage Street. Adam cited Section 3-412(F)(5) of the City of Manhattan zoning Regulations, which states the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board (MUAPB) shall consider "the impact that construction or expansion of the utility or facility will have upon legitimate interests of that portion of the community in which it is proposed to be located". He said while there is no predetermined definition of legitimate public interest, he argued that the interest at hand is the preservation of urban vitality, which extends into social vitality. Paving more land within this neighborhood does nothing to promote urban vitality but instead produces dead space, like the two large parking lots utilized by the United States Postal Service and another by Via Christi across the street. Adam suggested preserving the lot so a single- or two-family household be built in the lot instead. He said he and many of his neighbors have located to this neighborhood because of ease of access to many services and attractions that are located on this side of town. Adam proposed multiple options that would provide additional parking stall without constructing a parking lot at 600 Osage Street, including following the original plan of putting it on site. He said the north side of Leavenworth Street is currently designated as a bus lane.; with the current construction to establish a permanent bus lane along Juliette Avenue, the district could petition the City to allow parking along Leavenworth Street. During the day, there is adequate on-street parking within two blocks in any direction of the school. Adam asked why degrade the neighborhood when you don't have to. Anderson asked what the livability condition of the neighborhood currently is. Adam responded that some residences are in very good condition, while others are poorly kept. There is a mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied houses.

Josh Penabaz, 612 Osage Street, is in favor of the school district placing a parking lot on 600 Osage Street. Prior to the fire, he said, it was an unkempt apartment complex and he fears if developers obtained the land, it would become another apartment complex. He does not believe the alternative plan proposed by Moreau would be feasible. Penabaz would prefer the timeline associated with the district's proposed parking lot. He likes the landscaping

design of the proposed lot and appreciates the amount of greenery incorporated. He acknowledges that street parking is public parking, but it does get frustrating when he is unable to park in front of his own residence. Anderson asked whether Penabaz has off-street parking in the rear of the house. Penabaz responded that the three parking spaces behind his home are typically filled by the other six residents sharing the home. He said he would like the school to not encroach upon the playground because he believes that area is sacred for students, and believes the off-street parking will help alleviate some of the neighborhood's and teacher's woes.

Jared Trembley, 525 Wickham Road, said he wanted to remind the Board and those present that parking in front of one's house is not a right, the streets were designed to accommodate on-street parking. Trembley noted that regardless of the off-site parking lot being built, teachers will continue to fill the closest stalls first unless they are dictated not to. Within two blocks of the School, there are over 250 on-street parking spaces.

Terry Healy, 1601 Houston Street, said she has been a part time teacher with Woodrow Wilson for over 30 years. As an itinerant teacher, Healy said she regularly hauls large amounts of supplies from her vehicle to the School, which sometimes involves walking multiple blocks. She said she does not believe that Moreau's plans would work because they block important faculty and supply entrances into the School.

Rebecca Price, 3936 Golden Eagle Drive, said she recognizes that parking has been an issue at this location for many years. Price mentioned that Woodrow Wilson has been expanded multiple times without parking needs being adequately addressed. She said her car has been hit, sideswiped, and dinged multiple times parking along the street and is in favor of a quicker parking solution. She said removing the temporary classroom building would be acceptable but is not an option until the 6th graders are moved. Price said the teachers would prefer to have their own parking space to protect their vehicles and ease parking conditions at the campus.

Dorothy Claussen, 2224 Seaton Avenue, is the library media specialist at Woodrow Wilson. Claussen said she bikes to school during the summer since she only has to carry a backpack full of supplies. During the school year though, she said, it is over burdensome to ride across town and be adequately prepared to teach a full day of class. Claussen mentioned that after 4:00 p.m., Juliette Avenue turns from no-parking to open parking; when there are evening events, parking becomes available. She said the main issue is before and during the school day. During the day, only the south side of Leavenworth Street is available for parking, which she does not feel is a safe option for teachers to cross. Crossing Osage Street also appears unsafe. Claussen wanted to emphasize that teachers are competing for parking spaces with post office employees, renters, and homeowners in the area.

Jenna Padden, 9120 Cara's Way, speech pathologist for Woodrow Wilson, said she has two children who also attend the school. She said most days she has to park on-street and walk across. Padden does not feel safe utilizing street parking, nor for picking up and dropping off young students and students with special needs. She said a lot of parents with children in these categories prefer to park their vehicles and escort their children into the school. She said when the proposed parking lot is not in use by the school, she understands it would be open to the general public. She said in addition to all of the permanent faculty, the school also has student interns and various guests that drive to Woodrow Wilson.

Anne Cowan, 415 N. Juliette Street, said she has lived in the neighborhood for many years, and her children had attended Woodrow Wilson. She said she is against utilizing the vacant lot for parking. Cowan said she feels that installing a parking lot will negatively impact the residential feel of the neighborhood. Cowan implored the Board to examine other options when making a decision.

Christina Pease, 5626 Elbo Bluff Drive, said she wanted to highlight the neighborhood friendliness design of the proposed parking lot. She said it would benefit the neighborhood by including benches, attractive landscaping, and providing the neighborhood with parking when school is out of session. She said the parking lots associated with Via Christi and the Post Office are restricted for their private uses. She said the main priority for teachers is to get their vehicles off the street and to have more room for itinerant teachers to come and go as their duties require.

Barb Kephart, 1100 Lee Mill Circle, a part-time special education teacher, attempts to house equipment for an itinerant teacher in her classroom, but said the teacher requires some of those same materials at every location she teaches at. She said due to the itinerant teacher's position and duties, she is required to travel between schools and her time with students is rigidly defined and precious. She said finding parking is a waste of time that could be better spent with helping students. Kephart said she would like to see the parking lot approved because she believes it will make the surrounding area safer for students navigating the streets and will help traveling teachers.

Kurstin Harris, 601 Fremont Street, said she has lived there for the past 16 years and owns a business downtown. Harris said she is in favor of building the proposed parking lot and believes it would be beneficial to the neighborhood as a whole. Harris said she has apprehensions about a single-family house being built on the land. She believes it is far more likely that an apartment will be built on the property.

Deb Nauerth, 3800 Boston Circle, the principal of Woodrow Wilson, praised the hard work that her faculty and staff put in to perform their duties. Nauerth clarified that they are not requesting front row parking, just a space designated for them. She said many times residents park in faculty lots when teachers park in front of resident's homes. She said when the resident does not move the car early enough in the morning, their car takes up a valuable space for teachers. She said the school tries its best to be a good neighbor and allow residents to utilize their space when school is out of session. Nauerth said she believes the proposed parking lot would be safer for students, ease parking for faculty and staff, and become a benefit to the greater neighborhood. She said in the fall, the school will start their year with over 60 employees, not counting volunteers and interns.

Ebert asked about how the community knows they can utilize their parking spaces outside of school hours. Nauerth said they have had multiple friendly meetings and interactions where they explained they do not mind if the neighborhood utilizes the parking lot as long as it is outside of school hours. Ebert asked whether the need to have a car towed away on a Monday morning has every arisen. Nauerth said they have not done so yet, they try to work with the neighborhood as much as possible and typically will write a note or have RCPD run the license plate so they can contact the owner directly.

Ebert said in the staff report the total number of faculty/staff differs with Nauerth's testimony; he questioned the discrepancy. Nauerth said she believes the discrepancy probably

stems from outdated numbers. She said as of now, the school will have 60 total employees, not counting interns and volunteers. Nauerth said she was concerned with Moreau's plans because it blocks access to faculty and delivery doors.

Stith wondered whether the school would be able to reserve a few stalls for traveling teachers and Ebert wanted to know why teachers were forced to transport supplies between facilities instead of having all the equipment they need at every location. Nauerth said itinerant teachers do not typically have designated spaces nor is there proper funding to supply every school with every item.

Jenna Padden returned to the podium to add that she has a very high case load. She said the students she sees have scheduled appointments with back-to-back sessions. She said when parents have to search for parking, she still tries to give the student the full session time, even if they are late. This in turn pushes back all her other appointments and disrupts her schedule.

Janalea Then, 4592 Nature Avenue, said she is a 3rd grade teacher who teaches inside the mobile unit on campus. She said she has worked at a school that had given up parking lot space to accommodate additional faculty parking. She said that occurrence negatively impacted students who had lost areas they had formed memories of, and space to run around and play. She said she has multiple students who utilize the section of the playground with trees as a silent reading corner; encroaching upon the playground could potentially impact that area as well as others.

Heather Peterson said she wanted to highlight that multiple people have been injured due to hazards surrounding the street parking. Peterson said she also had issues with the alternative plan that was proposed by Moreau because it blocks entrances, trash, and delivery. She said the plan also could complicate snow removal and introduce more hazards.

Eric Reid, Assistant Superintendent, said he wanted to thank Moreau for proposing an alternative plan instead of just offering a complaint. He said since the district was unaware that this meeting was a public hearing, they had to scramble to get community input at an earlier meeting. He said from the feedback they received, they did attempt to design the parking lot to blend in with the community. Reid emphasized that if they found a more cost efficient plan, they would look into it closely because minimizing costs are a focal point for him. He said this proposed lot could be finished in the fall whereas waiting for the mobile classroom to leave would take until year 2021. To address the number of faculty discrepancy, Reid mentioned that they only counted faculty and staff that are in the school for the majority of the day. He said they did not count itinerant teachers as some of them work only in the mornings, while others only at night. Some others work two days a week while others may work more or less. He said as to not inflate the number of faculty and staff, they used a more conservative count.

Ebert asked whether the enrollment at Woodrow Wilson will be more or less following the end of the bond project and opening of another school. Reid speculated that enrollment will be down by approximately 25 percent. He said removing the 6th grade students will alleviate some of the overcrowding but will not have a significant impact on number of faculty. Ebert said he was astonished that the construction documents were so complete for a proposed plan and was shocked to see that the district had already purchased the land. Ebert questioned whether the proposed plan would solve the parking issue. Reid said

it will not, but it will definitely alleviate the problem.

Anderson asked if Woodrow Wilson has a system in place to monitor their parking lot. Reid responded that they try to maintain a good dialogue with their neighbors and cooperate with them and RCPD to notify residents.

Ebert closed the public hearing.

**Stith moved that the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board find that the public interests to be served by the proposed municipal facility outweigh the impacts upon the legitimate community interests, and recommend approval of a proposed parking lot for Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, based on the findings in the Staff Report, with the three conditions of approval recommended by City Administration. Reynard seconded.**

Ball said the city passed a bond issue that addresses the parking issue on-site. He said the on-site lot addresses most of the issues that the public commented on, including carrying items and being near the school. There is already an on-site solution that has already been approved by the citizens. He said the proposed lot at 600 Osage is a nice design but said that by taking property off of the tax roll those costs get passed around to other property owners. He said the duty of the MUAPB is to ensure that projects like these align with the long-term comprehensive plan and balance that with the desires and needs of the community. Ball said he expresses his full sympathies to the faculty and staff of Woodrow Wilson. He said he is very uncomfortable with taking a buildable lot and encroaching upon the neighborhood. He said he highly recommends looking closer at on-site parking and intends to support their proposal.

Nuss said that as a current member of the MUAPB and a former member of the school board understands this issue from both sides and sympathizes with the district. She said taking into consideration the effort it took to establish this neighborhood as a traditional neighborhood overlay, it is difficult to balance protecting the neighborhood and addressing the needs of the school. As a frequent visitor of the area and personal time spent in this neighborhood, Nuss said she has noticed there are underutilized parking lots. She suggested reaching out to Via Christi to develop a deal to better utilize the parking spaces. She said based on the staff report and the lot size at 600 Osage Street, the likelihood that any residence greater than a two-family dwelling getting permitted there is unlikely. She said due to the neighborhood overlay and the ability for the district to make its case before the City Commission, she said she will vote to recommend denial.

Anderson, who had lived in this neighborhood for many years, said he appreciates the walkability of the older neighborhoods. He said he understands and sympathizes with the faculty and staff, but also sympathizes with the homeowners in the neighborhood who have been attempting to restore it. In favor of the neighborhood, Anderson said he will vote to recommend denial.

Ebert, agreeing with Nuss and Anderson, said he found coming to a decision extremely difficult and felt sympathetic on both sides. He said he was uncomfortable that a public entity would be able to get such a proposal approved when a private entity would not have had their case presented to the board at all. He said he also worries about the domino effect as the school decides it needs more and more parking spaces as time goes on. For these reasons, he said he will recommend denial.

Reynard said he believes the MUAPB is applying the regulations too narrowly and should support the teachers and the school which serves as an anchor to the neighborhood. For these reasons, he said he will support their proposed parking lot.

Ebert said he strongly believes that parking on-site would be better.

**Motion failed , 3–3–0.**

3.2. A public hearing to consider whether the Aggieville Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan (*Applicant: City of Manhattan*)

Ben Chmiel presented the staff report.

Stith said he still had concerns about closing any of the streets permanently because of impacts to businesses. Chmiel responded that all the plans are very preliminary and are subject to change.

Anderson asked about the design of the proposed parking garage. Chmiel said there are no designs yet.

**Stith moved to approve and adopt Resolution No. 06-17-19-A, finding that the Aggieville Redevelopment Plan is consistent with the Comprehension Plan; Nuss seconded. Motion passed 6–0–0.**

#### **4. REPORTS AND COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF**

4.1. Planning updates from staff

Chad Bunger reminded everyone there will be a Wildcat Creek resiliency planning meeting in the City Commission room on Wednesday, June 19, 2019.

4.2. Comments from Board members

There were none.

4.3. Next meeting. Chair announced the next meeting is Monday, July 1, 2019.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

*Submitted by Dre'Vel Taylor, Planning Intern*