

**LEXINGTON PLANNING COMMISSION
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2009
5:00 P.M.**

**First floor meeting room in the
Rockbridge County Administrative Office Building**

Minutes

Members Present: T. Sanders J. Dunbar M. Harvey C. Miller
G. Macleod C. Smith

Members Absent: J. Gianniny

Staff Present: B. Blatter; Director of Planning and Development
V. Garrett; Secretary of Planning and Development

Call to Order: J. Dunbar called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Citizens' Comments Not on the Agenda: None to record.

Public Hearing:

*** Proposed subdivision of Courthouse Square, located at 2 South Main Street
and fronting on Main and Washington Streets**

Ben Adamson, Rockbridge Partners principal, explained the proposal. Rockbridge Partners is planning on purchasing the Courthouse property located at 2 South Main Street. They propose to subdivide the property into separate parcels so that they may take possession of the courtyard and the courthouse. The war memorial will stay in the County's possession and the courtyard will be gifted back to the City within 3 years. Council is in agreement and it is clearly documented in a signed contract that the courtyard will be gifted back to the City within 3 years.

There was not any public comment.

C. Miller moved to recommend approval of the subdivision as proposed. M. Harvey gave the second. The motion passed.

*** Proposed amendments to Article XIX, Planned Unit Development, of the
City Zoning Ordinance to limit the density of development to the net
developable land area of the property**

B. Blatter gave a brief explanation of the proposed amendments. G. Macleod pointed out that slopes of 26% or greater get 10% of land credited toward net developable land area. J. Dunbar opened up the meeting for public comment.

Uncus McThenia addressed the Planning Commission. He asked if any consideration had been

given to the “transferring mechanism” discussed previously. B. Blatter answered no.

With there being no further public comment, J. Dunbar closed the public hearing. After a brief Planning Commission discussion, C. Miller moved to forward the proposal to City Council with a favorable recommendation. T. Sanders gave the second. The motion passed.

Old Business: No discussion.

New Business:

*** Site plan review for renovation of and an addition to Lylburn Downing Middle School, 302 Diamond Street**

Dan Lyons, Superintendent of Lexington City Schools, Randy Jones, the lead architect, and Ben McMillan, the civil engineer, were present and explained the proposal. Mr. Jones gave a brief overview of the proposal. The addition will include a large cafeteria and administration space. The entrance will be relocated to help ease the problems associated with child drop-off and pick-up. Parking areas have been created. Additional parking spaces have also been created with pervious pavers to help manage storm water on site. There will be a loading/service area for the kitchen. The basketball courts are being relocated adjacent to the restroom area. The ball fields will shift slightly. The playing field area will be irrigated. The geothermal field, consisting of a series of wells, will be located in the playing field area. Mr. McMillan explained the geothermal system. The courtyards will be reworked with a new landscape plan.

C. Miller questioned whether or not the Police Department had reviewed the plans. It was pointed out that Lieutenant Miller had been part of the planning. B. Blatter went over the City Arborist’s concerns, which had already been forwarded to the landscape architect. The architects were agreeable to working with the suggestions/concerns submitted and will resubmit a more specific, detailed landscape plan in two weeks.

The lighting will be very focused and have a low light spill. Exterior lighting will be security lighting controlled by a timer.

C. Miller moved to separate the landscape plan from the site plan as presented to be acted on as two separate issues. T. Sanders gave the second. The motion passed.

C. Miller moved to approve the site plan for renovation of and addition to Lylburn Downing Middle School, including the building, physical activity fields, parking and drives. G. Macleod gave the second. The motion passed.

*** Site plan review for renovations to the Lylburn Downing Community Center**

Randy Jones, the lead architect, briefly explained the proposal to renovate Lylburn Downing Community Center. The interior will be renovated, the roof and windows will be replaced, site work will be done including repaving, sidewalks, and addressing storm water and erosion issues with rain gardens. The new entrance will be on the lower level and limited parking will be provided. The stone walls on the back side will be kept, with the intent to keep the existing

character of the building.

It was noted and made of record that the Land Owner listed on the application is incorrect and will be corrected.

G. Macleod moved to approve the site plan for renovations to the Lylburn Downing Community Center as proposed. T. Sanders gave the second.

L. Giles, residing at 6 Houston Street, addressed Planning Commission. She asked if, before proposing demolition of existing boundary pipe-fence, lights, and bases, the designers had considered their status as contributing features of the site's National Registry nomination. Mr. Jones indicated that he did not know if these elements are so designated. L. Giles indicated that they are, in fact, included in the nomination. Mr. Jones indicated that he did not know if these elements are so designated. L. Giles indicated that they are, in fact, included in the nomination and urged that they be conserved, rather than demolished.

G. Macleod asked that the following two items be attached to the previous motion:

- 1) determine whether elements scheduled for demolition are contributing factors of the Historic Registry Application and if so find a design other than demolition
- 2) rethink design of the proposed rain garden and "flume" in order to avoid hardscape.

The motion to approve the site plan for renovations to the Lylburn Downing Community Center passed with the two aforementioned items attached.

*** Presentation by the Chamber of Commerce concerning possible changes to the downtown sign regulations**

B. Blatter gave background information leading to the recommendation for possible changes to the downtown sign regulations.

Sammy Moore, Executive Director of Chamber of Commerce, addressed Planning Commission. He gave a brief history of how they had gotten to this point. John Owen, owner of Artists In Cahoots, gave a presentation. He suggested the current regulations are too restrictive and proposed the allowance of temporary signage. Specifically sandwich boards and display flags that feature words or simple phrases. The request also included illumination and lighted signage. John Morman, owner of Celtic Tides and Peanut Butter & Jelly, also addressed the Commission. He reiterated what Mr. Owen had said, adding the idea that interior signage should be left up to the business owners without any regulation from the City. Mike Gregg, owner of Blue Sky Bakery, addressed council. He distributed an article out of the USA Today which reported on the same issue. Tina Miller, owner of Ladles and Linens, commented that she had placed a temporary "chalkboard" sign outside to write specials on and that there was a direct increase in business from the sign.

Planning Commissioners discussed the issue. C. Miller suggested allowing the temporary signage and flags for a period of time, perhaps 1 year, to see what happens. She was not comfortable with the lighting issues. She asked that illuminated signage and lights be researched

further. T. Sanders questioned ADA requirements for the width of sidewalks. Liability issues and “policing” the signage were also discussed. J. Dunbar suggested coming up with a better word than “temporary” since that could include using cardboard or any type of temporary slab. She suggested materials and size needed to be discussed and made clear. Size and placement of flags also need to be clearly defined. L. Giles, HLF representative, addressed the Planning Commission. She pointed out safety issues as the primary concern. She also voiced concern with allowing illuminated signage and suggested temporary signage should be included in the total allowed per square feet of building frontage.

ARB had not yet had a presentation on the issue. C. Miller asked that the Planning Commission hold off further discussion until the ARB has had time to hear the presentation and make recommendations. J. Dunbar closed the discussion on the issue.

*** Review of draft Memorandum to City Council concerning Commission’s evaluation of the Smart (or form based) zoning code**

Discussion was held on the draft memo to City Council. Changes were noted and will be incorporated by B. Blatter.

(Please note- V. Garrett, Secretary of Planning left due to family issues)

Staff Report:

B. Blatter indicated he is still working on negotiating easements for Court House Square, cross walks in certain areas, and a more comprehensive directional sign system for the new parking garage.

M. Harvey asked if B. Blatter had seen an email she had sent to him. He had not but will review and speak with S. Paulk about it.

Approval of Minutes:

C. Miller moved to approve the December 11, 2008 minutes as submitted. M. Harvey gave the second. The motion passed.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.