

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Minutes of the Meeting of April 15, 2014  
Beginning at 2:00 p.m.

**PRESENT OF THE COMMISSION:** Chairwoman Christine Mondor, Valaw, Gitnik, Brown, Askey, Jones, Jackson, Burton-Faulk, Myers

**PRESENT OF THE STAFF:** Ismail, Gastil, Tymoczko, Hanna, Rakus, O'Neill

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**AGENDA ITEMS COVERED IN THESE MINUTES**

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1. Revised Mapa Plan of Lots (Bingham Street and South 11 <sup>th</sup> Street), 17 <sup>th</sup> Ward	2
2. Morrow Park City Apartments Consolidation Plan (Liberty Avenue and Baum Boulevard), 8 <sup>th</sup> Ward	3
3. 38 <sup>th</sup> Street Project Consolidation Plan (38 <sup>th</sup> Street east of Butler Street), 6 <sup>th</sup> Ward	3
4. Schmidt Plan of Lots (Pocusset Street west of Phillips Avenue), 14 <sup>th</sup> Ward	4
5. Mascaro Plan of Lots (Columbus Street and Metropolitan Street), 21 <sup>st</sup> Ward	4
6. City Subdivision Plan, Island Avenue, 21 <sup>st</sup> Ward	5
7. Hearing and Action: Project Development Plan #14-22, 5921-5923 Baum Boulevard, exterior renovations	6

Ms. Mondor chaired today's meeting and called the meeting to order with a roll call.

**A. ACTION ON THE MINUTES**

Mailed minutes had not been received by the Commission in time for the meeting; a request was made by the members to have the minutes sent electronically in the future.

Mr. Gitnik mentioned that he attended an orientation by the Mayor on Wednesday, April 19, 2014 for all new members appointed to Boards and Commissions: Christine Mondor, Barb Valaw, Fred Brown, John Jones, Lashawn Burton-Faulk all stated that they attended.









**D. DEVELOPMENT REVIEWS** (See **Attachment C** for staff reports.)

10. For Hearing and Action: Project Development Plan #14-22, 5921-5923 Baum Boulevard, exterior renovations, Baum Centre Overlay District

Ms. Rakus made a presentation in accord with the attached staff report and illustrations included in Attachment D. Ms. Rakus stated that the exterior renovations have been through staff design review and staff is in support of the application. Ms. Rakus recommended approval of the proposal and turned the presentation over to the applicant.

David Morgan, Morgan Architecture and Design, presented the project using a Power point and a printed presentation.

Ms. Mondor asked if there is an existing curb cut and Mr. Morgan said there is but there are plans to modify it or reduce it. Mr. Morgan showed what they have proposed for parking including an accessible parking spot. Mr. Morgan said they will be installing a ramp system also for access. Mr. Morgan stated that they are treating the rear as an additional entrance.

Mr. Gitnik asked where the dumpsters would be located and Mr. Morgan stated that they would be on the right there are no plans for an enclosure at this time. Ms. Mondor asked if the mechanicals will be rooftop and Mr. Morgan responded yes.

Mr. Morgan said they are installing channeling in the tile so that future tenants will be able to use that area for signage without having to drill into the tile.

Ms. Myers stated that we don't have a finished rendering as yet and you mentioned some down lighting and nothing showing the landscaping to soften the building. Mr. Morgan said the reason you don't see any lighting is that it is hidden by the bar. Mr. Morgan said he could submit that later on if you would like. Ms. Myers said you mentioned the signage and one of the things we are trying to do in the community is to make certain it is consistent and she is assuming it will be similar in nature. Mr. Morgan said the deals for the tenants are finalized which is why we aren't showing the signage but it will meet all of the guidelines and the zoning.

Mr. Gitnik said to follow-up on the landscaping, what type are you proposing. Mr. Morgan stated that on Baum Boulevard they are not proposing any landscaping right now, one thing that the landscaper has committed to is putting money into a pool for more cohesive landscape plan. They have discussed putting in street trees but they are interested in having the Forestry Department of the City of Pittsburgh putting that money where they see fit. Ms. Rakus stated that this is an alternative that is provided in the Zoning Code where the developers can pay into a fund when there are extenuating circumstances, the Urban Forester will evaluate and determine if trees are not possible. The money paid into that fund is earmarked for projects within the same neighborhood.

The Chairwoman called for comments from the public.

Lenore Williams, Baum Center Initiative, stated that they were unable to see a full presentation of the proposal so therefore they neither support nor oppose the plan. Attachment E, written testimony.

There being no more questions or comments from the public, the Chairwoman called for questions or comments from the Commission members.

Mr. Morgan stated that he is happy to commit to street trees; we want to see street trees there.

Ms. Mondor asked that a single façade that opens onto the street could start a trend and wanted to know if there were any requirements. Ms. Mondor asked if they had standing to ask if they have standing to ask that they reconsider the length of the façade relative to the number of penetrations. Ms. Mondor said that there is no sidewalk culture in that area and this building doesn't contribute to sidewalk culture as much as it could. Ms. Rakus said you are asking for changes in the design that would better address the sidewalk and street scape.

Ms. Myers asked the developer to go back to the original site plan. Ms. Myers said they are going to be the first one coming to that section of the neighborhood and they will be setting the standards. Ms. Myers said she question is addressing the curb appeal, she was expecting to see the finished look to see how it will blend in with the community. It is mentioned in the proposed conditions the relation to the surrounding buildings. Mr. Morgan said you wanted a rendering with this building in the surroundings. Ms. Myers said we don't have it and that is the only thing that is missing.

Ms. Tymoczko said to add to the earlier question, what you have in the report is a summarized version of the criteria, so it might help if I read the exact language. Ms. Tymoczko read that language from the Zoning Code. Ms. Tymoczko said the language does give the Commission some leeway.

Mr. Morgan said they want to reuse the existing building and re-clad the building in a way that is more esthetically pleasing. Ms. Ismail said in this case the Commission can amend the conditions.

Mr. Gitnik asked about the look of the exterior with the landscaping; they couldn't have that ready before this is presented to the Commission? Ms. Rakus said she could have, but generally we leave those details as a staff approval afterwards and tie it to the final occupancy permit. Mr. Gitnik said if he had seen some softening of the street it would be more visually appealing to him. Mr. Morgan said he thinks they will be able to put trees there, what they were thinking was there could be an overall street plan done with the City Forester so they aren't planting a tree that wouldn't match any future planning. Mr. Gitnik asked that once the trees are planted would there be enough sidewalk for pedestrians and trees. Ms. Rakus stated that the Urban Forester will review for accessibility and there is a five foot minimum requirement.

Ms. Mondor said they would all feel a lot more comfortable if the Baum Centre Group had been able to come out in support of the project. Mr. Morgan said that was mostly an oversight and it was too late to have another meeting before this hearing. Ms. Burton-Faulk said a suggestion is definitely to reach out to the community.

Mr. Gitnik asked if there was any way a condition be placed that would require the community review and Ms. Rakus stated that yes. Mr. Gitnik asked if they would have problem returning in two weeks to allow Forestry an opportunity to review. Mr. Morgan stated that they are trying to get the permit quickly and he isn't certain that he has the authority to commit to coming back, he would certainly commit to a conditional approval. Ms. Rakus said a condition could be added but not that they have to approve it.

Mr. Jones asked Lenora when they were scheduled to meet with the developer and Lenora said they anticipate that they will be meeting with the developer for the next project. Ms. Williams said they can make another arrangement with ELDI to have a meeting. Ms. Myers said staff could add the condition and that the developer will meet with the community but nothing that should hold up the developer.

Ms. Mondor asked if they have a right to approve with conditions or add a condition. Mr. Jones asked what they are proposing and Ms. Myers stated that she doesn't want them to have to come back to the Commission. Ms. Myers said she doesn't see the down lighting and the other thing would be the tree line because that impacts the entire street. Ms. Mondor asked if they need to attach a third condition that they meet with the community groups. Mr. Gitnik said isn't that meaningless if the community groups don't come back to the commission with their findings. Mr. Gitnik said his reason for wanting them to meet is so that the commission can hear what they want. Ms. Rakus said from a staff perspective it would be hard for us to manage that type of condition.

Ms. Myers asked that when it comes back to staff she would like them to look for that and Ms. Rakus said that we have in the conditions to review final landscaping plans, we can amend that to add lighting so it is called out as a condition. Ms. Myers said that was what she would like.

Ms. Mondor said we can add lighting, is there anything else that needs to be written. Director Ismail said one of the things that she has heard is that you want them to meet with the community before they do the second building. Discussion. Ms. Myers feels that with the conditions it is appropriate to let this project move along.

Ms. Mondor asked the Commission members if they felt ready to put forth a motion. Mr. Gitnik said he is going to abstain because he feels that the letter received from the community stating that they were not engaged is significant. Ms. Myers said there are two communities, one is East Liberty and the other is Baum. They didn't realize that Baum was part of that area and just an oversight. Mr. Jones said there are going to be many communities that have more than one group. Commission discussion.



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