

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission
First Floor Court Room, Rensselaer Community Center, 62 Washington Street
April 9, 2012

Members Present:

Charles Moore – Chair, Christine Van Vorst – Vice-Chair, James Ahlemeyer, Bob Campano, Tom Cardamone, Frank Adams, and George Farrell

Staff Present:

Daniel Berheide – Asst. Planning Director, Sarah Crowell – Director of Planning, and Jack Spath - Counsel.

Others Present

Dave Gardner, Lou Lourinia, among others.

Call to Order:

Chair Moore called the meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission to order at 6:34PM. Roll call was taken and quorum determined.

Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes

The meeting minutes for March were reviewed and accepted.

Communications

The Assistant Director of Planning stated that efforts to provide more access to applications under consideration by the Planning Commission has been successful. The Director of Planning announced upcoming training opportunities for the members of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals.

Old Business:

1. **Brayton Construction, 44 Aiken Ave, special use permit and site-plan approval.** Noting a need to allow the applicant more time to review the proposal with city staff, the Planning Commission tabled the item. Christine Van Vorst motioned to table the application, seconded by Frank Adams, and passed by all present.

New Business

1. **Stewarts Shop, 12 Partition St.** – Action Requested: Approve site-plan amendment to install an exterior freezer and restroom addition (7'9" x 24') and extend existing overhang for covered storage in the local business district. A representative, Mike, on behalf of Stewarts presented the plans to the Planning Commission. Due to the orientation of the building, landscaping and location of the additions, the general public passing by would not notice the new installations. Cedars are lining the

property boundaries to the south and west. The planning and building department staff stated they had reviewed and did not have any concerns specific to the construction or the overall site-plan proposed. Motion made by George Farrell to approve site-plan, seconded by Christine Van Vorst, and approved unanimously.

2. **Jack Chahal, 2 Manor Dr.** – Action Requested: Approve a site-plan to relocate the religious activities of the Sikh Association of the Capitol District to 2 Manor Dr. in the existing Carmela’s Banquet House in an MU-1 district. Jack Chahal described his congregation’s interest in owning and occupying the banquet hall known as Camela’s. Christine Van Vorst voiced a concern that the existing parking area was in disrepair and should be addressed. It was said the Sikh Association of the Capital District would work with the current owners to address the parking. Charles Moore noticed the fence bordering the east of the property was also broken. Charles Moore made one further observation, noting that though this would no longer receive taxes as a benefit from the property, he hoped the temple would continue to keep its doors open to the community. The primary concern raised was to see portions of the parking lot resurfaced or patched and the dumpster be screened or remain out of sight and was made a condition to approval within a year. A non-binding recommendation was made to put fences around the site. Christine Van Vorst made a motion to approve the site-plan. The motion was seconded by George Farrell. The motion was carried.
3. **William Bernardo, 53 Broadway** – Action Requested: Approve certificate of appropriateness to replace front steps and landing with monocrete and wrought iron railings in the historic district. In the absence of the applicant, the planning department staff described how it became necessary to replace the exterior steps for the safety of the tenants. The applicant replaced the steps with monocrete cast stairs. The Assistant Director of Planning showed a picture taken earlier that day of the new steps for review by the Planning Commission for a certificate of appropriateness. Viewing the replacement of the steps showed no dramatic difference from the previous stairs other than orientation, Mr. Farrell made a motion to approve the certificate of appropriateness. The motion was seconded by Frank Adams and approved by all.

Adjournment:

Chair Moore motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 PM. Seconded by Christine Van Vorst. Motion carried.

Next Meeting:

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 14th at 6:30 PM.

Record of Decisions:

An official record of decisions noting the details of motions and votes from this meeting along with any conditions & stipulations of approval has been filed with the City Clerk and a copy maintained in Planning Department records.

Respectfully Submitted,

Daniel W. Berheide, Secretary