

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission**  
**First Floor Court Room, Rensselaer Community Center, 62 Washington Street**  
**August 13, 2012**

**Members Present:**

Charles Moore – Chair, Bob Campano, Tom Cardamone, and George Farrell

**Members Absent:**

Christine Van Vorst – Vice-Chair, James Ahlemeyer, and Frank Adams

**Staff Present:**

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

**Others Present**

Colleen and Chris Pierson, Lou Lourinia, Dave Gardner, Aaron Harbeck, Jim Thomas, Barrie and Sherry Cuttler.

**Call to Order:**

Chair Moore called the meeting of the City of Rensselaer Planning Commission to order at 6:50PM. Roll call was taken and quorum determined.

**Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes for June were reviewed and without amendment were accepted.

**Communications**

None

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business**

- 1. Barrie Cuttler, 42 Partition St - Parking:** Action requested: Recommendation to the Zoning Board of Appeals to grant a variance for relief of two parking spaces from the required four (according to Section 179-13). Proposal is to convert old firehouse to a two family residence with two parking spaces.

Mr. Cuttler discussed his proposal to renovate the old firehouse to a two family residence, each unit with 2 to 3 rooms. The proposal would maintain the character of the old firehouse. The garage door

would allow access for two parking spaces. Mr. Cuttler said the residences will include the necessary fire separation and be up to building code. He has said the layout of the units will be unique given the historic nature of the property. He hopes to begin renovations in September. Charles asked about parking and whether the adjacent garage was a part of the property. To which Mr. Cuttler responded the garage is currently city owned and he has requested the city consider selling the property, which would eliminate his need for variances. He suggested the driveway could accommodate additional spaces but as it is not owned by Mr. Cuttler and in the city's right of way does not meet code requirements. After a question about fire code, Mr. Cuttler responded the building will be up to specifications and Dan Moore will receive certified plans to ensure this. The chair suggested the Planning Commission consider any questions relevant to the second request at this time. With no additional comments or questions a motion was made by Bob Campano recommending the Zoning Board of Appeals grants 42 Partition St., Barrie Cuttler, relief of two parking spaces from the required four (according to Section 179-13). The motion was seconded by George Farrell and passed by all present.

- 2. Barrie Cuttler, 42 Partition St – Lot size:** Action requested: Recommend to the Zoning Board of Appeals they grant a variance for relief from the requirements of section 179-13 to allow a two family residence on an undersized lot (25.25 x 107). Section 179-13 requires a minimum of 5,000 sq ft and 40 ft of frontage for a two family dwelling. Lot size is approximately 2700 sq ft. Proposal is to convert old firehouse to a two family residence with two parking spaces.

Without any additional comments or questions Bob Campano made a motion recommending the Zoning Board of Appeals grant 42 Partition St., Barrie Cuttler, grant a variance for relief (2300 sq ft) from the requirements of section 179-13 to allow a two family residence on an undersized lot (25.25 x 107). The motion was seconded by George Farrell. The motion passed.

- 3. Jim Thomas, 12 Nelson Ave:** Action Requested: Approve certificate of appropriateness to replace exterior old wood with new cement board on house and new railings. The walls will be colored Nantucket grey, the trim will be colored butter 'CertainTeed'.

Jim Thomas presented the samples of cement board and explained his proposal to redo the house siding and porch with spindles. After a couple questions regarding the extent of the proposal, Jim Thomas further explained additional repairs would be made to the garage. Bob Campano made a motion, seconded by Tom Cardamone, to approve a certificate of appropriateness to replace siding on the house with new cement board. The walls will be colored Nantucket grey, the trim will be colored butter 'CertainTeed'. Porch and railings to be replaced with historically appropriate wood materials and spindles. The trim will be replaced on the garage with similar material and color to the house. The garage door is to be replaced with a solid door with historically appropriate material. The rest of the garage will be painted similar to the house. The motion passed.

- 4. Aaron Harbeck, 13 Aiken:** Action Requested: Approve certificate of appropriateness to rehabilitate fire-damaged structure with vinyl siding and replace all windows.

For the purpose of transparency, he told the Planning Commission he was a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Harbeck began by describing a modification to his application, requesting the application be to restore the façade of the house to the original clapboard wood siding. He explained the house was recently damaged by a fire. It was discussed that a significant portion of the house still has vinyl siding and therefore would be repaired and replaced with similar vinyl siding in accordance with zoning code (Section H. Exemptions to Certification of Appropriateness) “to prevent deterioration or to replace parts of a structure with similar materials in order to correct deterioration,

decay, or damage.” The applicant added that his contractor was a sitting member on the board of Historic Albany, whose professional experience would ensure the restoration was consistent with historic standards. The Assistant Director of Planning added to the record that Chris Van Vorst, who was absent at the meeting, submitted prior to the meeting a positive recommendation on the proposal so long as the vinyl remains on “the sides and the back, as long as the front is done according to the Historic code.” George Farrell made a motion, seconded by Bob Campano, to approve certificate of appropriateness to restore the front façade to the original clapboard wood siding using like or matching materials where applicable. Colors on the façade will match the vinyl siding on adjacent surfaces and be indicative of colors available 100 years ago. Vinyl windows will replace all the windows and be set within the original frame on the front façade to retain historic appearance. Doors and roofing shall use the same or similar materials to the existing. The motion passed.

**Adjournment:**

A motion was made to adjourn by Charles Moore, seconded by George Farrell, and all agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 PM.

**Next Meeting:**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for September 10 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