

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 22, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. The Planning Commission was present in its entirety with Commissioners Emilson, Falk, Liske, Nelson, Councilor Meyer, Mayor Clark and Chairperson Canright in attendance.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Application for Rear Building Setback, Building Height and Parking; Location: Block 33, South 15 Ft. of West 50' of Lot 18, West 50' of Lots 19 and 20; Address: 521, 523, 525 Clinton Street; Zone: Historic Business (HB); Applicant: Sundra Hines for Gregory Young; Owner: Banco Building LLC.

Staff Report dated December 22, 2020 presenting background, analysis and staff recommendation prepared by the Town Planner. Memorandum from Applicant Sundra Hines dated December 22, 2020 regarding *Bank Building Height Variance*, submitted as a late addition to the Agenda Packet.

Town Planner Shay Coburn presented an application for 3 variances for the historic bank building. She explained the variances are requested in order to modify the building to provide for a proposed retail space, restaurant, hotel and roof top bar.

Coburn reviewed the criteria that must be met in order to grant each variance pursuant to the Ridgway Municipal Code. She explained the applicant is proposing to build up to the rear lot line which would create a 0' setback. The 0' setback may be needed to provide a three-story stair and elevator. The Planner explained how the criteria of practical difficulty could be met with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and preservation of the historic building. However, she also noted potential drainage impacts from the lot to neighboring properties as a result of a 0' lot line.

Planner Coburn reviewed the diagrams in the Staff Report to show how building height is measured. She noted the variance request for building height is only for the small area pertaining to the proposed elevator and stairs, which would be constructed at the rear of the building. She further explained guard rails are included in the building height request, but they will not have a visible impact since they will nearly be hidden by the existing parapet. The Planner commented the elevator and stairs need to be added to meet current building code, but it is not clear why a roof top bar has been added to the project.

Ms. Coburn reviewed the parking conditions explaining 6 parking spaces are required with the proposed use and the Applicant is requesting not provide any parking spaces. She noted an abutting egress issue and that 2 cars would barely fit into the historic building's unbuilt area of the parcel. Because of this Coburn advised that practical difficulty has been met to not provide the first 3 parking spaces on site and noted the applicant is willing to pay a \$3,000 per space fee-in lieu of providing the additional 3 parking spaces.

The Commissioners discussed the application with the Town Planner and expressed concerns over the drainage issues.

Applicant Sundra Hines said the drainage would be routed to the northwest corner of the lot via compound slope to the alley, and the roof will be completely reconstructed. She commented on the construction requirements in order to secure grant monies to preserve a historic building. Hines further commented that any additions must be done in a way that would render the building in its original state prior to the project if the additions were removed. Ms. Hines further explained the elevator must meet ADA requirements so that disabled patrons would be able to access the roof top bar.

Gregory Young, owner of the historic building, shared his vision for the proposed uses. Mr. Young explained he does not plan to change the building from its original stated purpose which is important in maintaining the building's architecture. The Owner further explained he plans to provide roof top venues incorporated with art exhibits during warm weather and the roof top bar is needed to maintain the projects' viability.

The Planning Commission discussed the variance requests with the Applicant and Owner. Ms. Hines requested direction from the Commission suggesting a loading/unloading area for the patrons near the hotel entrance. She explained the patrons would then be directed to park their cars elsewhere in town.

The Chairperson opened the hearing for public comment.

County resident Richard Pinney spoke in favor of the application. He asked if the consultants who conducted the parking study in 2018 were aware of the Space to Create Project, the Firehouse Project, and if they were aware of the parking variances for the projects. He expressed concerns regarding where hotel patrons with luggage might park and felt an unloading area would qualify as a parking space. Mr. Pinney also asked what type of fund secures the money paid as a fee-in-lieu of parking.

Tammee Tuttle spoke in favor of the application. She asked what the Town would do with the money paid as a fee-in-lieu of required parking spaces and was concerned that additional parking lots would replace town amenities such as the BMX (Bicycle Motocross) Park.

The Chairperson closed the hearing for public comment.

The Commission explained that money paid in-lieu of parking fees is held as part of the Town budget. Once enough funds have accrued the money can then be used to develop, pave and stripe-paint a parking area. The land behind the Ridgway Library might be the town-owned land used for this purpose, though development is far out into the future due to costs. It was also noted that while reduced variances were granted for both the Firehouse and Space to Create Projects, one parking space per residential unit was provided with each project.

Parking concerns were discussed between the Applicant and Commissioners. They noted parking away from hotel establishments is not an uncommon practice for communities due to traffic and road maintenance. Hines commented that loading/unloading areas might need to be a consideration for businesses as the Town grows. She proposed the idea of a common unloading area for businesses in that vicinity. Hotel staff would direct patrons to the appropriate parking

areas, and the hotel is proposing only 6 rooms, so that should have little impact on parking she continued. The concern is about safely loading and unloading luggage Ms. Hines clarified. The Commission suggested providing a loading area in the northwest rear of the building. However, Ms. Hines explained it is not clear in this part of the development stage how much space may be required for the elevator and roof renovation.

Planner Coburn clarified the questions about the *2018 Downtown Parking Assessment Report* which is located on the Town's website. She explained the Space to Create project was contemplated when the report was prepared, though the Firehouse Project was not. However, projected maximum uses for HB District pre-developments were calculated based on current growth projections. The report concludes that the Town will have adequate parking through 2044 she concluded. Coburn further clarified that no fees in lieu of parking have been paid by previous applicants to date and the fees are paid when the building permit is issued. She commented that once enough money has been accrued strategic decisions will be made about the location, size, etc. of a public parking area.

The Planning Commission discussed if the Applicant met criteria for each variance request. They agreed criteria is met for a 0' rear setback and have confidence in the Applicant to engineer the drainage issue appropriately.

ACTION:

Mayor Clark moved to approve the Application for Variance for Rear Building Setback to be 0 ft. because criteria have been met. Commissioner Emilson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The variance for building height was discussed. The Planning Commission agreed they need more information from the Applicant regarding the northern aspect of the building and more specific details about how much height would be needed for the elevator shaft. Ms. Hines requested a continuance for this matter to be discussed at the February Regular Planning Commission Meeting.

ACTION: Mayor Clark moved to continue the Application for Variance to Building Height to the February Regular Planning Commission Meeting as requested by the Applicant. Councilor Meyer seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

The Planner clarified the request for Variance for Parking. The Ridgway Municipal code requires 6 parking spaces for the proposed use. Her recommendation would be to not require 3 parking spaces on site because the Applicant has met criteria, and then the Applicant would pay \$3,000 per parking space for 3 off-site parking spaces. The Commission noted the Applicant should determine a plan to resolve the loading/unloading of cars in front of the hotel and how that traffic will be coordinated during street maintenance.

ACTION:

Councilor Meyer moved to approve the Application for Variance to Parking to provide no parking spaces on-site because the criteria have been met and the Applicant is required to pay a fee in lieu for all spaces required beyond the first three. Commissioner Liske seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

2. Landscaping Regulation Update, Second Discussion

Memorandum dated December 22, 2020 regarding *Landscaping Regulation Update*, prepared by the Town Planner. Memorandum dated December 22, 2020 regarding the response to the *Ridgway Landscaping Regulation Update*, prepared by Susan Carter, Horticulture and Natural Resources Agent from the Colorado State University Extension, TRA, submitted as a late addition to the Agenda Packet.

Town Planner Coburn presented the *Landscaping Regulation Update* memorandum and noted it is a summary of the first discussion; the existing Landscaping Regulations, Residential Design Standards and Commercial Design Standards from the Municipal Code, and an outline for this meeting based on the topics discussed in depth at the first meeting.

The discussion opened with the question of allowing, prohibiting or recommending certain plant species to be cultivated in Town.

The Town of Ridgway experience a power outage at 6:55 p.m. and many of the Commissioners and audience members were not able to reconnect to the Zoom Meeting. The Planning Commission took a break to allow time for connectivity to the Zoom meeting.

The meeting resumed at 7:00 p.m., with Commissioner Nelson, Councilor Meyer, Mayor Clark and Chairperson Carright in attendance.

Meanwhile, Susan Carter advised that town residents should be educated about proper plant placement instead of discouraging native species that require frequent watering. She further commented that recent studies show an increase in allergies due to more pollen in the air resulting from planting more male fruitless and cotton-less tree species.

The power outage continued throughout town. The remaining Commissioners, as well as many audience members were still not able to gain access to the meeting via internet on Zoom. The Commissioners that were able to stay tuned to the meeting agreed it would be helpful for all commissioners to review the documents submitted for this agenda item and email comments to the Planner to prevent further delays. Planner Coburn agreed to summarize comments received from the Commissioners and present them at the January Regular Planning Commission Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Christian
Deputy Clerk