

MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF SUMMIT HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

June 22, 2022 at 7:00pm
Summit City Hall
2nd Floor Large Conference Room

CALL TO ORDER: ADEQUATE ADVANCED NOTICE STATEMENT

ROLL CALL:

BRANDON RIGHI, JAMES BURGMEYER, TOM CONWAY, MEREDITH GAYLORD, CAROLINE KING, ALISON CHIEFFO, JENNIFER BALSON-ALVAREZ (PLANNING BOARD LIAISON), MARJORIE FOX (COUNCIL LIAISON)

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

MINUTES FROM 5/20/2022 are under review to be prepared by our next meeting on July 20th – by Thomas Conway

ADVISORY REVIEWS - No Collective Reviews

NEW BUSINESS

1. Liaison Updates & News:

City Council / Marjorie Fox (for Greg Vartan)

- Summit approved additional parklets including Boxwood Coffee on Bank Street.
- Summit Downtown Inc (SDI) sent out an electronic survey addressing Maple Street pedestrian-only proposals for 2023 season. Survey was sent to various city mailing lists. Placement consultants were hired by SDI to study potential closure of Maple Street for 2023 and beyond.
- New recycling vendor starting July 1st. Trash/recycling picked up on the same day.
- BSW Updates:
 - June 15th common council meeting had two Broad Street West presentations one on the financials and one on the design aspects of subdistrict 3.
 - June 20th a special common council meeting was held at the Summit Community Center to introduce an ordinance to amend the BSW redevelopment plan. The amendment included removing the Summit Post Office from the plan and capping number of apartments at 133 units for all four districts. Amendments would be presented at the Planning Board Meeting on June 27th.
 - June 27th Planning Board Meeting will discuss the proposed amendments and determine whether amendments are not inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Planning Board / Jennifer Alvarez

- HPC Ordinance Update – HPC Chair (Tom Conway) will be sending HPC ordinance directly to common council for approval.
- June 27th planning board meeting will be held at the Summit Community Center. Public comment will be allowed on proposed amendments to the Redevelopment Plan. Planning Board will have 45 days to make determination.

2. **HPC Awards 2022:**

Update from Caroline King- HPC's Awards in the past were announced at the Historically Society's Taste of Summit. With no event planned for 2022 HPC is looking for a time and place to present the 2022 awards. Upcoming possibly options – Four Centuries weekend, Reeves Reed Arboretum House tour.

3. **BSW Subcommittee Update:**

HPC members: Thomas Conway AIA, Chair; Brandon Righi, Vice Chair; Jim Burgmeyer, Architect.

The Summit HPC has had extensive discussions over the last 4 years about the BSW redevelopment zone.

- We outlined our concern about preserving Memorial Hall on February 28, 2019 memo and that BSW “development should demonstrate continuity with its historic surroundings regarding volume and character” – this was recommendations made to Topology (and the Planning Board) in preparation of the BSW redevelopment plan.
- After the first draft of the design of all three Subdistricts 1-3 was publicly presented in 2021, were asked by the Mayor of Summit, and then subsequently with the Council to review our opinions regarding the proposal. Our opinion was - to summarize - that the Subdistrict 3 proposed building is way too MASSIVE in scale - we likened it to a huge cruise ship - and were displeased by the monolithic quality of the proposed building and traffic and safety issues.
- Based on the Masterplan, DRO and our HPC Design Guidelines (Note; all public documents and all on our city of Summit Website) Our comments were - and still are- that the proposed building design is way too tall, too long, too monolithic and we recommended that the volume and scale needed to be a story shorter and be broken down to different distinct buildings with passage space between them to mitigate the volume to make it fit into the neighborhood and its historic neighbors. We also recommend that the proposed Morris Avenue driveway in and out of the building parking garage undermines the open space adjacent to our City Landmarked Memorial Hall and it should be relocated to Broad Street for the safety of children, pedestrians and drivers.
- These comments and concerns have been reiterated in our recent discussions and minutes from the February presentation “workshop” that 5 HPC Commissioner attended & then reflected in our March 2022 minutes. We remain concerned that the development team

inferred (intentionally or not) that at their recent presentation “reflected our comments”. It does not.

The Summit HPC Commission’s main task is to serve as an advisory commission to the City’s Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, and City Council

**What is the HPC’s charge from the City of Summit?
Under article 14 of our city ordinances.**

1. “Safeguard the heritage of the City of Summit by preserving resources’
2. To maintain and develop an appropriate and harmonious setting for historically significant structures, sites and districts located in Summit.
3. To encourage beautification and private investment in **historic landmarks** and historic districts **and the surrounding properties and landscapes**.

What documents does the HPC reference for these reviews?

City of Summit Documents: Masterplan, DRO, HPC Guidelines, HPC Ordinance & the US Secretary of Interior standards.

- We at the HPC have a working knowledge of all of these documents and their implications and guidance.

Location

According to our City of Summit Historic Preservation Map

The Subdistrict 3 property and building is surrounded by 5 City of Summit Landmark buildings.... 5 or the total 38 – that’s 13 percent of our entire City’s landmarked buildings for the entire town.

They are:

1. Memorial Hall
2. St. Teresa of Avila Sacristy
3. Suburban Garage
4. The YMCA
5. The Post Office

- We want sensitively scaled contextual design appropriate to suburban Summit that knits seamlessly into our city and historic landmarks. We want to avoid development that overwhelms the size and scale of our existing town and the fabric and texture (streetscape, road grid, pedestrian circulation, parking and safety)- most importantly our Historic City Landmarked Buildings. We are alarmed that the City of Summit is taking the developer’s lead, not leading the developer and architects.
- Our HPC BSW Subcommittee will continue to scour our City’s Public Documents to glean clarification to our advisory recipients on what our City’s vision has been over the past century and educate everyone on what IS sensitive development that would be in keeping with the City’s character and scale.

Our recommendations:

- Follow the 2019 BSW redevelopment plan to a maximum number of 45 units per acre.
- Limit the height of any building on this site (or surrounding sites) to a maximum of 4 stories (with the 4th story step back at least 10 feet from the façade).

- Break up the building into 2 or 3 distinct above-ground elements with public pedestrian circulation between. NOT A MEGABLOCK.
- Move the subterranean parking entry/exit off of Morris Avenue and have it connect off of Broad Street.
- Eliminate all of the proposed site “extras” and instead build landscape, hardscape, street furniture and street lighting that is consistent with our Historic Downtown District. Let the artwalk and other “improvements” be city driven later.
- Provide public parking overflow for Subdistrict 3. Note any new future parking building in this zone should be as contextual and building-like as possible.

NEXT MEETING

DATE: Wednesday July 20, 2022, Summit City Hall Large Conference Room

MOTION TO ADJOURN