



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY BUILDING & ZONING
CITY HALL, 62 WASHINGTON STREET RENSSELAER, NEW YORK 12144-2696 Planning (518) 465-
1693 Building (518) 462-5489 Fax (518) 465-2031

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the City of Rensselaer Zoning Board of Appeals First Floor
Conference Room, Rensselaer Community Center, 62 Washington Street

February 27, 2012

Members Present:

Chair – Gene Hilstro, Vice Chair – Bill Bulnes, Kenneth Richeson, and Aaron Harbeck

Members Not Present:

Terance Ruso, Paula Micheli, and Michael Scott

Staff Present:

Daniel W. Berheide – Assistant Director of Planning, Jack Spath – Counsel.

Others Present

Dave Gardner, Jenn Hoeffner, Martha Hobbs, and Frank McCullough

Call to Order:

The regular meeting of the City of Rensselaer Zoning Board of Appeals was called to order at 6:08 PM. Roll call was taken and it was determined a quorum was present.

Adoption of Past Meeting Minutes:

Bill Bulnes made a motion to adopt as submitted the minutes of the regular meetings on September 27th, 2011, seconded by Gene Hilstro, and carried by those present.

Announcements:

The Assistant Director called attention to the schedule of meetings for the year.

Old Business

NONE

New Business

1. Monolith Solar, 442 Washington St. – Action Requested: Approve use variance to locate office operations and storage into the previously vacated commercial space in an R-3 zone.

Jen Hoeffner, on behalf of Monolith Solar, described the business and reason for the use variance to the Zoning Board of Appeals. Further description of the unique nature of the property and prior use of the building as commercial was submitted to the board as reason to support the

application. The chair opened the public hearing. Dave Gardner spoke positively about having a new business but asked if their operations required more parking than was physically available on-site. Frank McCullough asked if the adjacent lots would be paved and whether any hazardous materials would be stored on-site. Frank McCullough also spoke in favor of the business. The Assistant Director demonstrated that based on the dimensions of the proposed office and the existing area there should be sufficient parking to meet the requirements of the current zoning. The Assistant Director further noted the City of Rensselaer and the company is negotiating the use or sale of the adjacent lots for additional parking and storage with the company. The Chair closed the public hearing and William Bulnes made a motion to approve the use variance, in that doing so will not alter the character of the neighborhood, that the property is unique as a commercial space, incapable of earning a reasonable return on investment, and is not viewed as a self-created hardship. The motion was seconded by Gene Hilstro. The motion passed with all present in favor.

2. Martha Hobbs of Hobbs Community Chest, 112 Broadway – Action Requested: Approve an area variance for relief from parking requirements in the Local Business District.

Prior to the arrival of Martha Hobbs, there was some discussion about what conditions were placed on the site-plan approved by Planning Commission. Public comment raised a concern about how donations would be accepted wondering if a “drop-box” would be located on site. The Assistant Director answered questions from the Zoning Board of Appeals members related to the application. The Chair of the ZBA opened the public hearing and Frank McCullough stated that he felt the landlord was not properly attending to the appearance of the building saying several bricks are missing from the façade. The applicant arrives and presents a summary of her business. She addresses some of the earlier questions about whether there would be a “dropbox” saying that it is more of a clutter and does not intend on having one. The two attendees from the public speak in favor of the applicant. The Chair closes the public hearing. Aaron Harbeck makes a motion to approve the area variance for relief from parking requirements with the stipulation that no external dropoff will occur on site, including a dropbox. All donations and deliveries should occur during business hours.

Adjournment:

Hearing no objections, Mr. Bulnes motioned to adjourn, Mr. Hilstro seconded, all were in favor. The meeting adjourned the meeting at 6:35PM.

Next Meeting:

The next regular meeting is scheduled for March 26th at 6:00 PM.

Record of Decisions:

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

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Berheide Secretary