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Mayor

Jason M. Pezzullo, AICP
Committee Chairman
Director of Planning



John Ireland
Fire Department

David Rodio
Building Official

Nick Capezza
Engineering Division

Stephen Mulcahy
Traffic Safety Division

DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

Cranston City Hall
869 Park Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

MINUTES 9:00 AM, WEDNESDAY, February 16, 2022 TELECONFERENCE

1. Call to Order

Chairman Pezzullo called the Development Plan Review Committee meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. on Zoom.

The following members were in attendance for the meeting: Chairman Jason Pezzullo, Nick Capezza, Franklin Paulino, and Stan Pikul.

The following Planning Department members were in attendance: Joshua Berry, Senior Planner; and Alex Berardo, Planning Technician.

Also attending: Atty. John DiBona, Sheryl Guglielmo, Michael Gazdacko, Eric Simpson, and Ryan Schepper for Seasons Corner Market; Frank DiZoglio and Melissa Lawson for Montecatini Properties.

2. Approval of Minutes of 2/2/22 Meeting

Chairman Pezzullo recommended continuing this item to the next DPR meeting because the draft minutes were only distributed for review via email the night before.

3. "Montecatini Properties / Domain Realty" *

Pre-Application / Jurisdictional

Location: 846 Oaklawn Avenue – AP 15, Lot 361
Zoning District: C-3 General Business
Owner/applicant: Domain Realty LLC, 800 Oaklawn Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920
Proposal: The applicant proposes to convert single-family residence into a commercial / retail establishment consistent with the recent zone change.

Mr. DiZoglio presented his revised site plan based on committee members' feedback from the 1-19-22 DPR meeting, with Mr. Berry sharing a digital copy of the plans over Zoom for review. He noted modifications to dimensional grading, ADA-accessible parking spaces, a proposed turnaround, the Oaklawn Avenue curb cut, and a stockade fence. Project architect Melissa Lawson also called the Committee's attention to added details regarding the ramp, entrance, and width of the driveway off Weaver Street. The plans Mr. DiZoglio presented retained the existing garage and breezeway, although Mr. DiZoglio said he intended to demolish them at some point in the future. Chairman Pezzullo felt those structures should be taken off the plan if they would be demolished; Mr. Pikul agreed that it should be marked "demolished."

Chairman Pezzullo then invited the committee members to offer their comments and reminded them that the question at hand is to establish jurisdiction for the project.

Mr. Capezza asked whether or not the surface exposed by the eventual demolition of the garage would be impervious, and if so, what would be done to mitigate associated issues such as runoff. He also felt the sidewalk on Weaver St should be at least 5 feet in width and asked whether the curbing was labeled as being made of concrete on the plans. He added that if no other concrete sidewalks currently existed on Weaver, Mr. DiZoglio would have the option of installing an asphalt sidewalk.

Chairman Pezzullo reported that in a prior conversation with Mr. Mulcahy, who was not able to attend this meeting, Mr. Mulcahy said he believed the Oaklawn Avenue curb cut should be eliminated if the parking

spaces are moved to the Weaver St side of the property. Mr. Capezza thought the curb cut should be retained, potentially for use by delivery vehicles; Mr. Pikul echoed Mr. Mulcahy's preference that it be eliminated altogether if the parking area is moved. Mr. DiZoglio said he did not want to close off the curb cut because he needed it to serve as a site access point for work in Phase 2 of the development. Mr. Berry asked if inter-parcel access between 840 and 846 Oaklawn would solve that issue; Mr. DiZoglio said he didn't think so because there would only be space for one-way travel.

Mr. Pikul said he did not see a stamp on the plan and asked who prepared it. Mr. DiZoglio confirmed that he had submitted an unstamped copy but said it was prepared by the same surveyor that prepared the previous version of the site plan. Mr. Pikul also noted the grade change with the abutting property to the east and asked about the need for a retaining wall, as well as additional greenery being planted.

Chairman Pezzullo felt there were still several serious unresolved questions with the application, particularly relating to Mr. DiZoglio's intentions for Phase 2 work, and said the applicant needed to provide his plans to the Planning Department sooner than the night before the meeting. He said that the Committee's options were to take full jurisdiction over the project now or to schedule another pre-application meeting at a future DPR meeting. Mr. Pikul wanted to continue the discussion, while Mr. Capezza wanted to take jurisdiction.

Mr. Berry asked Chairman Pezzullo to address the matter of the vegetated buffer vs. stockade fence in greater detail. Chairman Pezzullo said choices about buffers are often either-or in nature, as fences can easily block sunlight to vegetation in narrow buffer strips. He said he wouldn't mind seeing plantings on the slope at the property's eastern edge, but asked how the Committee would see a landscape plan unless they took full jurisdiction. Mr. Pikul agreed with Chairman Pezzullo's point and decided to support taking jurisdiction. Since the Committee members were in agreement, Chairman Pezzullo said the application will move forward to the preliminary plan stage.

4. "Seasons Corner Market" *

Pre-Application

<i>Location:</i>	2050 Plainfield Pike, AP 36, Lots 116 & 117
<i>Zoning District:</i>	C-5 Heavy Business, Industry
<i>Owner/applicant:</i>	D S D Enterprises, LLC / Seasons Corner Market
<i>Proposal:</i>	The applicant proposes to raze the existing structure and construct a gas station and convenient store.

Ms. Guglielmo of DiPrete Engineering presented the plans. She said the applicant wants to redevelop their property, which consists of two parcels, both zoned C-5. She noted that the site is predominantly paved and has one curb cut on Plainfield Pike and another three on Sailor Way. She said DiPrete is in the process of preparing an updated site survey, but noted in the meantime that existing drainage and sewer easements run through the property, a seasonal stream/small wetland area can be found in the rear, and there are two historic cemetery plots on the site as well. She noted that there were no residential abutters within a 300-foot radius, and although she doubted the applicant would need a use variance, she suspected one would be needed for signage.

Discussing the applicant's plans for the property, Ms. Guglielmo said they intend to raze the existing building and replace it with a 5,000 ft² building containing a coffee shop, with both walk-in and drive-thru access. She added that the drive-thru could allow for 10 vehicles to queue, consistent with RIDOT guidelines. For the gas station component, they are proposing a canopy with 5 double-sided pump stations as well as a diesel pump in the rear off the building. Loading and fuel delivery would also occur to the rear of the building. Finally, Ms. Guglielmo said that the landscaping plan has not been finalized, but the project would result in less paved surface area than is currently the case.

Chairman Pezzullo then asked the Committee members to share their comments.

Mr. Pikul asked if the small parking area in the northeast corner of the site would continue to host cars for sale; Mr. Gazdacko said no and that the area would most likely be dedicated to employee parking. He then asked how motorists exiting the site via the Plainfield Pike curb cut would take a left turn; Ms. Guglielmo said she's hoping to convince RIDOT to make a break in the median. Mr. Pikul requested that information about signage be added to the plans when complete, and said the 35-foot driveway width was large for a C-5 zone and would probably require a variance. For her part, Ms. Guglielmo asked Mr. Pikul if the decorative cupola on the proposed building would count toward the total height; he said yes.

Mr. Paulino asked how many jobs would be created and what the hours of operation would be for the business. Mr. Gazdacko said he anticipated 24/7 service and said anywhere between 15 and 30 individuals could be employed at the site. Mr. Paulino advised that the applicant might need a permit from the City Clerk's office to operate 24 hours a day.

Mr. Berry shared a few staff observations and recommendations. He noted the presence of historic cemeteries on the site will mean that plan approval must go through the City Council, per Section 15.20.010 of the Zoning Code. He also said that the applicants should eliminate non-compliant parking spaces (notably several in the northeastern corner of the site) since their current plans already exceed the minimum requirements by 12 spaces. Mr. Berry also reminded the applicants that they will need to review the landscaping requirements, submit plans, and request waivers if needed. He encouraged them to review Section 17.28.010 regarding the drive-thru and suspected that there could be a conflict between the vehicle stacking and truck circulation, but qualified the comment by noting that was the Committee's purview. Finally, he asked whether the southernmost of the three Sailor Way curb cuts was going to be used as Exit Only and if so, whether it would be marked as such on the plan.

Chairman Pezzullo reiterated Mr. Berry's points about the need to gain City Council approval due to the presence of historic cemeteries and to eliminate non-compliant parking spaces. Mr. Gazdacko asked if providing electric vehicle charging stations would impact the number of parking spaces required; Chairman Pezzullo said no. Mr. Pikul added that he needed the location of the EV charging stations shown on the site plans.

Ms. Guglielmo asked if plan approval could only be granted once the applicants had all necessary state permits in hand, as opposed to making receipt of the permits a condition of approval. Chairman Pezzullo said the permits needed to be received prior to approval because, from a practical perspective, permits sometimes impact the site layout. On a related note, Ms. Guglielmo asked that Planning staff let the applicant team know where they would like the vegetated buffer to be located and how wide they want it to be, since it could also impact the site plans.

Chairman Pezzullo finalized the discussion by noting that full jurisdiction would be taken on the matter.

Upon motion made by Mr. Capezza and seconded by Mr. Pikul, the Development Plan Review Committee unanimously voted to conclude the meeting at 10:04 a.m.