



DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

City Hall – 3rd Floor, Room 309
869 Park Avenue – Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

MINUTES CITY HALL – 3rd FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBER 9:30AM – WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

1. Call to Order

Chairman Jason Pezzullo called the Development Plan Review Committee meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. in the City Council chamber.

The following members were in attendance for the meeting: Jason M. Pezzullo – Planning Director, Justin Mateus – DPW Director, Stephen Mulcahy – Traffic Safety Manager, and Stanley Pikul – Zoning Official. Mr. Woyciechowski – Fire Marshal was not present.

The following Planning Department staff members were in attendance: Asst. Director, Kenneth R. Kirkland; Jonas Bruggemann, Senior Planner; and Brianna Valcourt, Senior Planner.

2. “Early Foundation Academy”

Preliminary Plan

(vote taken)

<i>Location:</i>	181 Princess Avenue AP 8/3, Lot 1552
<i>Zoning District:</i>	B-1 (Single- & Two-Family Residential)
<i>Applicant / Owner:</i>	Early Foundation Academy, LLC
<i>Proposal:</i>	Expansion of the existing pre-school and daycare and to rework the parking and pick-up / drop-off locations.

Chairman Pezzullo invited the applicant to introduce the proposal and provide information regarding the application.

Joseph Manera Esq., on behalf of the applicant, provided background of the application for the record.

Kenneth Filarski, FAIA, on behalf of the applicant provided context of the site in regard to the proposed expansion. Mr. Filarski stated that the proposed expansion remains below the maximum percentage of allowable lot coverage.

Chairman Pezzullo asked Mr. Pikul about the relief approved by the ZBR. Mr. Pikul stated that the ZBR had previously approved a dimensional variance request and extension of the use.

There was no further, immediate discussion by the DPRC following Mr. Filarski’s testimony.

A member of the applicant’s team stated that the proposal allows for sufficient site access and circulation of vehicles for student pick-up and drop-off.

Mr. Mulcahy inquired about the required parking spaces for the site. Mr. Paul Bannon, a representative of the applicant’s team stated that there were fourteen (14) required spaces. Mr. Mulcahy advised the applicant to include the parking requirement and proposed parking spaces on the final plan submission.

Mr. Mulcahy further inquired about the curbing on Fountain Street, stating that the defined curb cut must extend to the property line. Mr. Pezzullo inquired if both curbing and sidewalk extension would be required. Mr. Mulcahy suggested the applicant include finished sidewalks along the property line.

Mr. Bannon asked Mr. Mulcahy what kind of curbing would be required? Mr. Mulcahy stated that it would need to match existing curbing. Mr. Mulcahy stated that there is no interior protection on Meadow Avenue, which would be required.

Mr. Mulcahy also stated that there would need to be a delineation between the sidewalk and the road, as none exists currently. Mr. Bannon stated that striping could be included, or to remove a strip of asphalt and add landscaping. Mr. Mulcahy reiterated that there should be separation besides striping on-site. Mr. Pezzullo agreed.

Mr. Mateus stated that curbing is a requirement in that area, which would not require sidewalks. Mr. Bannon responded, stating that he did not want to increase impervious surfaces on the site. Mr. Mulcahy stated that there must be curbing on Fountain Avenue with a separation on the Meadow Avenue side. Mr. Bannon stated that a landscaping buffer should be sufficient on the property line for landscaping and physical delineation purposes.

Mr. Mulcahy suggested that the applicant include directional signage to increase traffic efficiency. Mr. Mulcahy also inquired if the proposed ADA spaces were in conformance to City code. Mr. Bannon verified that the ADA spaces were in conformance.

Chairman Pezzullo clarified that this item was listed as a preliminary plan conference on the agenda, therefore the neighborhood was not notified. The item must be rescheduled and reheard for the following DPRC meeting, 4/3/24. Notices will be sent out to abutters.

Mr. Pikul asked Mr. Pezzullo if the applicant may still apply for permits for the expansion? Mr. Pezzullo had no concerns with moving forward with construction through the permitting process.

Mr. Mateus inquired if new utilities will be included on-site. Mr. Bannon stated that additional utilities are not included in the expansion proposal.

There were no additional comments made by Committee members. No vote was taken.

3. “<u>Atwood Salon</u>”	Jurisdictional Review / Pre-Application Conference	(vote taken)
<i>Location:</i>	495 Atwood Avenue AP 12/4, Lot 3116	
<i>Zoning District:</i>	M-1 (Restricted Industry)	
<i>Applicant / Owner:</i>	495 Investments, LLC	
<i>Proposal:</i>	Interior renovations and conversion of a pre-existing non-conforming doctor's office into a personal care services facility, (salon mall).	

Chairman Pezzullo introduced the application and invited the applicant to provide context of the proposal to the Committee.

Peter Casale, Code Consultant, on behalf of the applicant, provided background information and the proposal.

Chairman Pezzullo stated that Staff has reviewed the floor plan and noted that there are many individual users within the site, with only 14 parking spaces provided, including the required ADA parking space. Mr. Pezzullo stated that the existing code had not envisioned this type of contemporary use, therefore the DPRC must determine the appropriate standards for this application in regard to parking.

Mr. Casale stated that this concept of spatial use is quite new. The salon space would be rented by a primary renter with individual stylists renting out chairs on a fluctuating basis. The space essentially acts as a functional salon space with a reduced rental load. Mr. Casale stated that typically 20-30% of the space is utilized in the morning, 50-60% of the space utilized in the afternoon, and after 5:00 p.m. occupancy declines. Mr. Casale stated that on Fridays and Saturday approximately 75-80% stylists occupy the space to serve clients. According to Mr. Casale, there is a 10-12% turnover of stylists every 3 months, per each rental agreement renewal period. Further, Mr. Casale stated that each appointment without hair coloring is an approximate 45-minute stay, and an appointment with hair coloring can last from one and a half hours to three hours.

Chairman Pezzullo stated that the Committee will not assess parking based on fluctuating utilization, but maximum utilization. Mr. Pezzullo asked Mr. Casale if each unit is one stylist/one customer or multiple chairs?

Mr. Casale stated that every proposed suite except for one are single units.

Mr. Mulcahy shared concerns about parking availability for operators and customers in anticipation of overlap of client appointments. Mr. Mulcahy stated that the overflow parking from a neighboring business of a similar use would be exacerbated by this proposal with insufficient parking on-site.

Mr. Casale stated that not all clients and stylists have personal vehicles and that many utilize rideshare programs.

Mr. Mulcahy stated that the existing parking is insufficient for even half of the proposed occupancy of the units.

Mr. Casale inquired if reducing useable area for parking create a consensus between the applicant and the Committee. Mr. Pezzullo responded, stating that as a use variance application the proposal is met with a high level of scrutiny for review. Mr. Pezzullo asked the applicant to supply Staff with a traffic and parking analysis, which has not yet been submitted.

Mr. Pezzullo asked Mr. Pikul if the commercial parking standards apply for this particular use? Mr. Pikul stated that there are not applicable code restrictions currently in place for this use regarding parking and circulation. Mr. Pezzullo inquired if the applicant is seeking a use variance, would the commercial parking regulations apply? Mr. Pikul stated that the only relevant standard would be the following: one (1) parking space for every 300 sq. ft. of activity.

Mr. Pezzullo reiterated his concerns about the proposed parking on-site. Mr. Pezzullo stated that if the DPRC voted successfully to take jurisdiction over this application, the proposal would need approval by the DPRC for subsequent ZBR review. Further, if the DPRC were to take jurisdiction over this application, then the Committee would be able to attach specific conditions of approval to the proposal.

Mr. Pikul stated that he is unsure what condition(s) of approval would need to be included.

Mr. Pezzullo stated that the DPRC is not obligated to approval the proposal as presented, if the Committee voted to take jurisdiction of the application.

Mr. Mateus reiterated previous parking-related concerns. Mr. Mateus stated that the proposal includes 25 units and 25 clients at max capacity, which equates to 50 individuals on-site with 14 allotted parking spaces. Mr. Mateus stated that at 28% capacity the allotted parking would be maximized to the fullest extent. He stated that this is not feasible nor practical.

Mr. Casale suggested potentially removing 1,200 sq. ft. of the property to revert to non-salon space systems.

Mr. Pezzullo stated that alternative proposals can be presented. Mr. Pezzullo stated that if the applicant was interested in amending the application, it may be re-assessed at a subsequent meeting. Mr. Mulcahy stated that the DPRC can entertain an amended proposal.

Mr. Casale inquired if Planning Staff or the DPRC had recorded feedback and/or complaints about the overflow parking on 505 Atwood Avenue. Mr. Pezzullo stated that he is not aware of any related complaints. Mr. Pezzullo stated that the proposed use is a contemporary use and that the DPRC is reviewing the long-term effects of the parking of these sites.

Mr. Pezzullo entertained a motion on the matter.

Upon motion made by Mr. Pikul and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy, the Development Plan Review Committee unanimously voted (4-0) to take jurisdiction of this application.

4. Adjournment (Next Meeting | April 3, 2024)

(vote taken)

Upon motion made by Mr. Pikul, and seconded by Mr. Mulcahy, the Development Plan Review Committee voted unanimously (4-0) to adjourn the meeting at 10:27 a.m.