

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

DESIGN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES – November 16, 2022

CPC ITEMS:

1. The **Department of Public Works** representative made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the November 16, 2022 meeting, which was seconded by the **HDLC** representative and unanimously adopted.
2. **Consideration:** Design Review 025/22 – Proposal for a new construction, multi-family residential development. The development requires DAC review because it exceeds 40,000 square feet in floor area. The item has been **WITHDRAWN** from the agenda. (VM)
3. **Consideration:** Design Review 052/22 – Proposal for a new construction, a mixed-use development in an EC Enhancement Corridor Design Overlay. The development requires DAC review because exceeds 40,000 square feet in floor area. (RJ)

The proposal is for construction of a 4-story, primarily wood-framed structure with 51 dwelling units. The first floor will include two commercial tenant spaces under 1,000 square feet each, as well as a management office, community room, fitness room, bike storage room, and apartments. The upper floors will be multi-family residences for lease. There is an associated parking area and community park. The site has 56,137 square feet of gross building area and includes 43,255 square feet of total site area. The Multi-Family Dwelling development is consistent with the permitted use in the HMC-2 District and the development is permitted by right.

The North side of the site on Robertson Street is designated to be Community Park with pervious paving and a centrally located mature tree. The outdoor community park space will connect with a porch to the interior of the building's 771.48 square foot community space. The applicant explained a partnership with NORA on the project and further contributions to the design have been considered from local residents' input submitted during community meetings over the past year.

Question – Have adjacent properties been considered and how does the current proposal fit into the surrounding area?

Response – The applicant is cognizant of the scale opportunity of the property while also preserving density.

The **HDLC** representative expressed improving continuity and integration between the two buildings. Design elements of one building can be integrated into both structures, particularly color transitions.

The **CPA** representative discussed staircases as potential communal space; however, three railings separate the welcoming potential onto the front porch and retail space. The **RTA** representative suggests a “softening” of stairs through landscaping. The applicant suggests focusing on the instructiveness of the retail space along the building’s frontage to connect better with the public space.

The **PKWYS** representation requested that the applicant revise the landscape plans to comply with **Article 23, Section 23.11 Parkway Trees** that requires 1 shade tree spaced at 40 feet or 1 ornamental tree at 25 feet spacing on St. Bernard Avenue and North Robertson Street, subject to Parks and Parkways approval.

CPC – Balconies relocated from the South side of the building to become front facing would activate the space increasing interaction between residents and public.

Provisos

1. Consider how to integration of exterior massing in between the two elements with contemporary versus traditional methods.
2. Providing trees along the parkway subject to Parks and Parkways approval.
3. Soften St. Bernard front porch and stairway entry sequence.

The **CPC** representative made a motion for **APPROVAL** subject to modifications that were discussed which was seconded by the **HDLC** representative and unanimously adopted.

4. **Consideration:** Design Review 051/22 - Administrative site plan review for renovations to an existing grocery store on a site with over 100 ft of frontage in an EC Enhancement Corridor Design Overlay District. (CB)

The proposal is alterations to an existing supermarket (Rouses), including demolition, site work, new interior finishes, fixtures, and equipment with supporting structural, plumbing, mechanical and electrical work for a complete renovation at the municipal address of 4500 Tchoupitoulas Street. The site is a total area of 223,463 sf., with the building area of 62,045 sf. The development will demolish a section of the parking lot near the front exterior of the building. The applicant is proposing to renovate the existing vacant lot that would feature new bathrooms, new café seating, new food prep areas, a reduction of parking spaces (329 spaces to 325 spaces), and updates to exterior building materials (new railings, aluminum storefront entrance doors, and new brick walls). The site will increase the amount of green space from 15,763 sf to 16,383 sf. The auto-oriented use is consistent with the permitted uses within its C-2 Auto-Oriented Commercial District and the renovation is permitted by-right.

During the review, the applicant noted that the renovation is mainly interior, with each department of the store being gutted and renovated in a similar manner as other renovations to local Rouses in the area (Freret Street). Currently, the site has issues with ADA access, therefore the plans are to consolidate existing ADA parking spaces and increasing access for those users. After an ADA Study was performed, concerns with some of the grades of the parking lot and the condition of the pavement was recommended to be adjusted. The plans also include adding an ADA compliant ramp and new mechanical equipment along the backside of the building. The exterior architectural changes planned will be windows for the café that are shuttered.

The **PKWYS** representative requested that the applicant submit the landscape plans to include a tree protection plan and the addition or replacement of the existing trees in the parking lot, subject to Parks and Parkways approval. The applicant was also asked to consider the opportunity to improve the permeable open space and stormwater management of the site when redeveloping the parking lot by the City Planning representative. The **HDLC** representative mentioned the possibility of adding an entry to the cafe from the street; the applicant replied that it would ultimately be up to the client.

The **PKWYS** representative also mentioned that the ADA ramp appears to exit right into the right of way sidewalk; the applicant would need to go before the encroachments board and work with the city to raise the sidewalk to create this additional exit for fire egress.

The **CPA** representative made a motion for **APPROVAL** subject to modifications that were discussed which was seconded by the **CPC** representative and unanimously adopted.

Provisos

1. Provide color renderings of landscape plan, including tree protection, landscaping along Tchoupitoulas-side of the building, and the addition and/or replacement of existing parking lot trees, subject to review by Parks and Parkways
2. Consult with Public Works regarding the handicap ramp into public right-of-way and rising the sidewalks from street to the building, go before Real Estate and Records (RER) for encroachment(s), subject to review by Department of Public Works.

NON-CPC ITEMS:

5. **Consideration**: Design Review 050/22 – Proposal for a new softball field at Morris FX Jeff Sr Park.

The proposal is for a new softball field at Morris FX Jeff Sr Park, including site infrastructure, access paths, fencing and bollards, covered dugouts and bleachers. Formerly named Behrman Park, the site is a partnership with NORD, plans to create a women's Softball field adjacent to a pre-existing Tee-Ball field. Improvements to the site

include a NCAA compliant women's softball field located on the West side of the park. NORD has proposed a synthetic infield, possibly AstroTurf and a well-manicured outfield. The applicant proposes six wooden LED lights surrounding the field to provide substantial lighting during dusk. All proposed recreational facilities would need to comply with **Article 21, Section 21.5.C.1. B. Non-Residential Uses** in that light poles for outdoor recreational facilities, including those that are part of an educational facility, are limited to a maximum of sixty (60) feet in height. The applicant proposes plans for bollards along the entrance drive and fencing to prevent residents from parking on the park site.

Question – Is there a Master Plan that explains integration amongst park systems in the area?

Response - Capital Improvements is working on a Master Plan as part of the Capital budget, there is currently not a Master Plan including changes to Morris FX Jeff. Sr. Park.

CPA representative asserts that Morris FX Jeff Sr. Park is in a strong position of need to be accommodated for in a Master Plan with recreational components. **CPA** representative also includes that Parking should be shown on the site plan and fencing should be more intentional.

The applicant emphasized that the school located across the street raises concern about parking on the site during large/high traffic events.

The **PKWYS** representative suggests enclosing the subject site to create a safe and accessible entrance from General Meyer Avenue. Also, there should be an emphasis on tree protection. The proposed site plan which indicates a discrepancy between existing trees on the site and number of trees represented on the site plan. For instance, the plan would include removing two (2) trees located on Florence Park entranceway of the subject site. The **PKWAYS** representative suggests a plan to recognize the issue of feasibility and management of maintenance of a proposed retention pond on the South side of the Softball field, while also addressing a Sewerage and Waterboard issue with a leak in a water line.

The applicant confirms that NORD would have the responsibility of maintenance of the retention pond.

The **RTA** representative acknowledges that RTA bus stop 103, is located at the main entrance of the site and proposes a welcoming landscape and visual element for residents traveling to and from the site.

The **CPC** representative made a motion for **APPROVAL** subject to modifications that were discussed which was seconded by the **CPA** representative and unanimously adopted.

Provisos

- 1.) Consider upgrades to the transit stop and accessibility from the transit stop to the subject site.
- 2.) Provide clear delineation between the new complex, fencing, and General Meyer Avenue.
- 3.) Resolve the conflict with the trees at the Softball field by distinguishing plan for protection and any potential conflicts in which tree removal is proposed.
- 4.) Consider a Master Plan and reconcile the Northern edge of the park.
- 5.) Provide a revised site plan including parking lot area with landscaping.