

SITE PLAN COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 23, 2008

1. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:04 p.m. Committee members present were Vice-Chair Casey Lee, Bob Breslau, Sam Engel, Jr., and Jeff Evans. Also present were Planning and Zoning Manager David Quigley, Deputy Planning and Zoning Manager David Abramson, Planner Lise Bazinet, Chief Landscape Inspector Chris Richter, Urban Forester Tim Lee, and Secretary Janet Gale recording the meeting. Chair Harry Venis was absent.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 12, 2008

Mr. Breslau made a motion, seconded by Mr. Evans, to approve the minutes of August 12, 2008. In a voice vote, with Chair Venis being absent, all voted in favor. (**Motion carried 4-0**)

3. SITE PLAN

Modification

3.1 SPM 1-5-08, Norwegian Seamen's Church/Scandinavian Center, 2950 South Flamingo Road (A-1)

John Voigt, Michelle Diaz-Mendez, Dag Havgar, Jerry Clawson, Tomas Suarez and Al Miller, representing the petitioner, were present. Ms. Bazinet summarized the planning report and used PowerPoint to display elevations, aerials and the site plan.

Mr. Voigt provided a presentation and explained that this was more than a church as it served as a community facility in assisting people from Scandinavian countries. He advised that the existing residence, which had been built by the previous owner of the property, had been worked into the facility design.

Mr. Breslau remarked that this was a very unique use for a project that would potentially be surrounded by single-family homes. His concern was that it appeared to be too commercial for a residential neighborhood. Mr. Breslau commented that the dumpster location was improperly placed as it should have been shielded from the public view. On his plans, he pointed out a more suitable location and discussed the prospect with Mr. Clawson. Since there was a turning radius issue which may not have made it possible for a garbage truck to maneuver, Mr. Breslau suggested that the dumpster be relocated to the west side of the parking garage; that the previous dumpster location be replaced with parking spaces; and that the petitioner re-examine the radiuses and demonstrate that a garbage truck would be able to access the dumpster and safely exit the complex. Ms. Diaz-Mendez noted the changes to the plans.

Other comments from Mr. Breslau regarded the placement of an access sidewalk through one of the landscaped parking islands which would connect as a marked crosswalk to the main entrance sidewalk. Although he deferred his architectural comments to other more experienced members of the Committee, Mr. Breslau stressed that he had major concerns about the architectural compatibility of the project and the adequacy of the landscape buffering.

Mr. Evans asked to be "walked through" a "3-D" elevation of the site plan and Mr. Clawson obliged. From an eye-level perspective approaching the site, it was evident that large blank walls were the prominent view. He asked what the residential accommodations would be for the rectory since the project was to be rezoned. Reverend Havgar explained that the pastor and staff would reside in the townhouse rectory. Mr. Evans asked if there were to be deed restrictions on the residences and Mr. Voigt confirmed that there would and advised that if the use was discontinued, so would the right to use the rectory as residences.

Mr. Evans asked about the pool. Reverend Havgar explained that on one side of the facility was a classic church and rectory, and on the other side was a common place for all types of family/community activities for Scandinavians living abroad.

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In reviewing the plans, Mr. Evans noted that there was a lot of effort and expense in providing infrastructure for drainage particularly since the site elevation happened to be quite high. He wondered if there were constraints on architecture because of so much expense going into the ground for infrastructure of retaining walls. Mr. Evans cautioned that construction under the ground added up quickly and it looked pretty elaborate to him. He said that “too often in the past, builders have come back before the Committee for modifications which had to be made because they went over budget. Corners had to be cut and the end product had not been what was envisioned at the beginning.” Mr. Evans believed that the front of the complex should draw you in and be welcoming rather than having large blank walls. He suggested that the drop-off point should provide overhead protection instead of a trellis.

Mr. Engel’s concerns were that the view from Flamingo Road was quite stark and similar to a warehouse, and the view from a single-family home to the north would be of the two-story townhouses.

Mr. Clawson explained that the townhouses were pushed to the northern edge of the property in order to allow for an informal playing field in the center of the complex. Mr. Engel pointed out that the septic tanks and drain fields were located in that area of the playing field and would be “mounded up” which would negate part of the playing field. Since Ms. Diaz-Mendez was in the process of contracting for installation of the septic tanks, Mr. Engel suggested that she start with the Broward County Health Department first to find out what the specifications should be.

Mr. Evans asked that the petitioner provide a color board with samples of materials and paint colors.

Vice-Chair Lee indicated that the buffers were rather weak considering that they were up against single-family residences. She preferred the clustering of plants in order to create a screening mechanism. Vice-Chair Lee suggested that Mr. Miller visit a few sites along Flamingo Road where he could see good examples of what was expected. She stated that on the north side buffer, the trees were too far apart. Vice-Chair Lee asked for an “overlay” of the site plan showing the landscape plan. The landscape plan as presented did not depict parking spaces, light poles or utility easements which must be taken into consideration. Since the petitioner was uncertain if the project would be built in phases, Vice-Chair Lee suggested that all the perimeter landscaping be installed prior to issuance of the first Certificate of Occupancy.

Mr. Miller confirmed that there would be shrubs planted around the dumpster at its new location. He indicated that he would appropriate larger screening and buffering materials for Flamingo Road as well as taller plantings to soften the stark architecture of the garage and the side of the community center building. Vice-Chair Lee advised that Orange Geiger trees did not perform well and suggested that they be replaced with something else on the landscape plan. Mr. Miller responded that it would not be a problem to make the switch. As the petitioner had not been reviewed by the Central Broward Drainage District, Vice-Chair Lee requested that if many changes were made to the landscape plans as a result of the review, that it be brought back to the Committee for re-review. Mr. Miller agreed to that stipulation.

Mr. Evans expressed his opinion that he could not vote for approval of this item as presented. He would prefer to table the item in order for the petitioner to have the time to address the concerns expressed by the Committee. Mr. Voigt discussed the prospect with his clients who were amenable to have the time to make the modifications by a date certain.

Besides the duties entrusted to the members of the Committee, Mr. Breslau addressed this item from the perspective of a neighbor. He spoke of the design of the Sheridan House and how the architects managed to make it appear residential. Mr. Breslau agreed with Mr. Evans’ viewpoint that by tabling the item, the petitioner would have time to take this from a commercial to a residential appearance. Mr. Engel expressed his agreement about recommending a tabling.

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Mr. Voigt asked about the townhouse part of the plan and if the Committee would prefer that it appear to be a “multi-family use that looked like single-family houses.” Committee members responded affirmatively.

Mr. Evans noted that the materials for the chapel roof had not been identified. He approved the function of the plans and credited it with huge potential; however, suggested that the façade needed to be changed. Mr. Clawson advised that he understood what the Committee wanted as he had designed the administrative building at Sheridan House. Mr. Quigley advised that the property to the south of this site had recently been purchased for a park facility and could, therefore, “add a new wrinkle” to the project. Vice-Chair Lee believed that strong buffers were needed on all four sides of the site since it had not been determined what type of park was planned.

Mr. Evans made a motion, seconded by Mr. Engel, to table to October 21, 2008. In a voice vote, with Chair Venis being absent, all voted in favor. **(Motion carried 4-0)**

4. OLD BUSINESS

4.1 Site Plan Review Process for Capital Projects

Mr. Quigley advised that Public Works/Capital Projects Director Manny Diez intended to attend the meeting of October 7th which had been cancelled. As Committee members wanted to speak with him, they asked Mr. Quigley to reschedule the meeting. Mr. Breslau updated Vice-Chair Lee about the standards issue which was expected of the Town.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Evans noted that the addresses were incorrect on his and Chair Venis’ packets. Mr. Quigley and Ms. Gale responded that they would make the corrections.

Mr. Evans noticed that the Dunkin Donuts building on Pine Island and State Road 84 was being re-stuccoed and he wondered if a modification or change request had been submitted for the site. Mr. Quigley indicated that he would look into it.

Vice-Chair Lee appreciated the efforts of staff in having Flannigan’s tone down its paint colors to match the materials color board submitted at Site Plan review.

Mr. Quigley advised that staff would be providing an architectural review survey for the Regional Activity Center. It comprised of a series of slides in order to gauge opinions on architectural styles so that the architectural code for that area could be developed.

6. COMMENTS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

Mr. Breslau had been advised that Tower Shops would apply for a site plan modification and he suggested that it would be a good opportunity to address maintenance and operational issues that have beleaguered the site.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business and no objections, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Date Approved: _____

Chair/Committee Member