

**Borough of Caldwell
Planning Board Special Meeting
June 25, 2014
Minutes**

The Planning Board was called to order by Mr. Gardner at 7:13 PM in the Municipal Building, second floor Council Chambers.

ROLL CALL: Mr. Kinzel, Ms. Martin, Ms. Finnegan, Mr. Gardner, Mr. Mihalik, Ms. Santiago and Mr. Byrne

PRESENT: Alan Trembulak, Esq. and Mr. Marucci

ABSENT: Councilman Durkin and Mayor Dassing

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE: The statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act was read.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The public minutes of May 14, 2014 were approved

NEW BUSINESS:

Application P14-001, Caldwell College, 120 Bloomfield Avenue, Block 57, Lot 5, Block 60, Lot 3, 3.01, 3.02, 3.03, 3.04
Site Plan Approval

Mr. James Bruno, Costano Quigley, LLC, introduced himself as the attorney for the applicant. He testifies that they are here tonight to construct two additional parking areas on the College Campus. The College shares the campus with Mount St. Dominic Academy, the Sisters of St. Dominic and portions of the land are owned by the Sisters of St. Dominic. The plan is to present two witnesses tonight Dr. Nancy Blattner, President of the College who will address the needs for the parking and Mr. Michael Petry, Professional Engineer and Licensed Planner who will present the details of the application.

Dr. Nancy Blattner was sworn in. Dr. Blattner testifies that she is the President of Caldwell College and at the end of June she will finish five years in this roll. Dr. Blattner testifies that she was specifically involved in the preparation of the plans that is here before the Board and she was very involved in the development of these plans because it is a very important issue to the college community and our employees and students. She further testifies that the College has contracted with offsite parking that we were able to displace some of their staff employees. She spoke about parking structures that cost anywhere from 2 ½ to 3 times on what it would cost for a paved lot.

Dr. Blattner testified that the Parking lot near the Newman Center is limited to employees only. She has worked with a landscaper and was pleased to learn that if you have the right equipment you can dig up a relatively mature tree and it can be transplanted. There would be 15 trees that can be transplanted. The residents that live on Ryerson will see trees and the berm opposed to the parking surface and the cars.

Mr. Bruno asks Dr. Blattner how she proposes to enforce the Newman Parking lot for staff only and Dr. Blattner responds that there are stickers that the faculty or staff will have that will allow them to park in that lot. If a car is not legally parked there the first infraction is a ticket and there after the car is booted and there is a fine to have the boot removed.

Dr. Blattner further testifies that they hoping Bloomfield Avenue is the primary entrance and exit to the College. The address of the college is 120 Bloomfield Avenue and that's the address they use for anyone coming to visit the college.

Mr. Mihalik questioned whether she had considered any other locations on the campus for the Parking and Dr. Blattner responded that there is an area around the tennis courts that is being proposed as a second parking space. When Mr. Petry was hired they asked him to look at what partials of land would be best suited in order to accommodate additional parking.

Mr. Vere asked the question of the rules for students that have vehicles and are living on the campus and Dr. Blattner responded that the residential students are allowed to have cars on campus.

Ms. Finnegan asked who would enforce the faculty and staff parking lot and Dr. Blattner responded that they have a full-time security director and they have hired a security force provider G4S who have been on the campus all the time for the past year.

Ms. Finnegan stated that the Autism Center was just in front of the Board for parking that was approved and Dr. Blattner responded that they were never intended for employees there were about seven parking spots and they were intended for the families that were bringing their children to be treated.

Discussion continued on the number of students and the parking on Ryerson Avenue.

Ms. Finnegan asked Dr. Blattner what her ultimate idea is for the College. You went from a small woman's college to a co-ed College to a University in a pretty small suburban setting. Do you have plans for more building, more dorms and lots more parking and Dr. Blattner responded that they are not going to build. Dr. Blattner testifies that she is interested in renovating and using the space that they have.

Mr. Gardner asked that Dr. Blattner talk about the student population now, versus five years ago and Dr. Blattner responded that five years ago they had 997 full-time undergraduate traditional age students. This fall we are estimated to have 1207 full-time students.

Margie Jameson, 56 Oak Grove Road asked if the College has ever considered a pass key and a gate in that new area and on Ryerson to keeping down the traffic and Dr. Blattner responded that there are ways to address this without having to go through a key or a gate.

Robert Mallon, 11 Hawthorne Road testified that gates were never put up on both Ryerson entrances as promised when the Newman Center was built he wants to know why not and Dr. Blattner responded that she was not there at that time and was not aware of it. Mr. Mallon asked if any study was done on the impact of properties in the surrounding areas and Dr. Blattner responded that they have not conducted a study on how a parking lot would affect the property value of the surrounding homes.

Alex Panzano, 7 Seymour Street asked if they are going to replace the trees and Dr. Blattner responded yes that they hired a landscaper for the trees.

Vincent Cocilovo, 19 Grove Street spoke about using off campus parking and shuttling employees. He also asked if a study has been done on traffic and an environmental study that will affect the landscape and Dr. Blattner responded that they have not done a study.

Nathan Ross, 7 Grove Street spoke about parking on campus.

Rich Hauser, 33 Arlington Avenue asked if there would be a possibility of a parking deck jointly with Mt. St. Dominic and the sisters in the back area with West Caldwell and Caldwell and Dr. Blattner responded we have considered a parking structure and the cost is prohibitive and are not financially able to do that.

Luis DaCosta, 12 Seymour Street asked about enrollment and parking.

Ann Marchioni, Environmental Commission stated that many Universities have parking decks and addition to those solar panels on top.

Mrs. Barrett, 13 Seymour Street asked about a five year plan.

Brian McLaughlin, 28 Grove Street asked if Dr. Blattner owned the home that she lives in and Dr. Blattner responded no.

Barbara Bonessi, 7 Grove Street had questions on the property value.

Jonathan Zuk, 58 Ryerson Avenue asked the question about how the college views their roll in letting the residents live that way and continue the way the neighborhood has been in the last 20 years and Dr. Blattner responded that she worked with people in the neighborhood to invite more than 200 neighbors in October 2010. She is interested in the neighbors forming a better relationship with the institution.

Discussion continued on the two (2) Parking lots and who they are intended for and whether it will be gated or fenced in.

Discussion continued on the possibility of closing Ryerson Avenue.

Mr. Gartland asked if there was ever a study on the percentage of faculty and or students entering the campus via the Bloomfield Avenue entrance versus the Ryerson Avenue entrance and Dr. Blattner responded that she didn't believe there was a study.

Vincent Cocilovo, 19 Grove Street asked what the capacity is for the college and Dr. Blattner responded that they are some hundred students below of their capacity.

Discussion continued on offsite parking and shuttling for employees and faculty.

Alan Trembulak testified that the college or any applicant has to prove a need for more parking if an applicant is required to provide ten (10) parking spaces and they want to provide twenty (20) they are allowed to do that. The ordinance provides for minimum parking requirements and he is saying this because there seems to be a lot of questions about this which isn't really relevant for purposes of what the Board has to decide.

Mr. Bruno stated that the College is in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and he hopes the residences will see what they are proposing to do and what is permitted to the zones and the college knows the concerns and they don't want to do whatever they want but they have the right to do what we are proposing.

Discussion continued on the amount of students who have cars.

Pat, 50 Oak Grove Road asked if the college has applied or requested any state or government funds to put up a structure parking lot and Dr. Blattner responded that they are a private entity and are not eligible for state or federal funding to build a parking lot.

Recess 9:31PM – 9:45PM

J. Michael Petry was sworn in and qualified as an expert Planner and Engineer. His firm was hired in 2013 to analyze areas within the campus that would be suitable for an expansion of parking. He testified that at least 100 vehicles needed to be dealt with and they looked at several areas that could accommodate the additional parking. .

Exhibit

- A-1 Overall Campus Plan
- A-2 Tennis Court Layout Sheet
- A-3 Tennis Court Grading Plan
- A-4 Tennis Court Lighting Plan
- A-5 Tennis Court Landscape Plan
- A-6 Newman Center Layout
- A-7 Newman Center Grading & Drainage
- A-8 Newman Center Lighting
- A-9 Newman Center Landscaping

Mr. Petry testifies that the Zoning Ordinance in the Municipality in Caldwell sets the standard for what the person, whether it's the college or a single family property owner, can do with their lot in this particular zone. The impervious coverage limitation is 40% the existing development within the campus represents 30.8% so when asked how far can you go within the confines of the ordinance, this site can be developed to a 40% coverage. The 922 spaces that are provided are short of the 956 spaces that are required by ordinance.

Mr. Petry testifies that the college is at peak capacity on week days and specifically during the fall semester. He further testifies that the plans that has been developed and is before the board, is in full conformance with the Zoning Board. The site has been developed to a 32.62% impervious coverage which is still below the 40% that is permitted.

Exhibit A-2 Tennis Court

Mr. Petry testifies that the Tennis court lot has 9x19 parking stalls and this is required by code this parking lot accommodates 62 cars.

Exhibit A-3 Grading

Mr. Petry testifies that the gravel area from the rear corner of the tennis courts pitches towards the existing parking lot and it drains to the drainage system in that is within that parking lot.

Exhibit A-4 Lighting

Mr. Petry testifies that the proposed lighting is the same fixtures that exist in the parking lot. However these fixtures have been fit with LED lighting in them which are energy efficient and provides less glare.

Exhibit A-5 Landscaping

Mr. Petry testifies that there will be more internal planting which includes shade trees and incorporated supplemental screening using Blue spruce and American holly.

Exhibit A-6 Newman Center

Mr. Petry testifies that this lot is specifically designated for staff parking. The initial lot would total 62 parking spaces and the future expansion would allow another 25.

Mr. Gartland asked Mr. Petry if the proposed parking lot is for 62 spaces as the proposed tennis court and Mr. Petry responded the tennis courts are a net of 62 and the Newman center has 62 and 25 in the future.

Exhibit A-7 Grading plan Newman Center

Mr. Petry testifies on the drainage of the Parking lot.

Ms. Finnegan testified that the Environmental Commission states that the system that he is proposing has not been approved by the DEP and Mr. Petry responded that it is and he will provide documentation to the Environmental Commission. Mr. Petry testified that the college will commit to any tree that is lost two evergreens of the same species between 6' and 8' will be planted.

Exhibit A-8 Lighting Newman Center

Mr. Petry testifies that the lighting is similar LED fixtures and the polls are lower mounted height. There are polls on the perimeter of the lot with outside shields and they are 15' high. The goal of the lighting was to reduce the spillage.

Exhibit A-9 Newman Center Landscaping

Mr. Petry testifies this plan is a supplemental planting that are proposed the relocation of the 15 evergreen trees that are planted out along the berm and in terms of supplemental planting they have proposed a series of evergreen trees within the area along the perimeter of the site to fill out and they are proposing these trees at a rate of 2 to 1 for those that have been removed.

Ms. Finnegan spoke about the trees that are being planted and she is looking for more intense planting along that road.

Discussion continued on the planting and fencing at the parking lots.

Mr. Petry testifies that the plan he has proposed before this Board is fully compliant and it requires no variances. In his opinion, both as an Engineer and Planner, the College is entitled to improve with whatever reasonable conditions this Board proposes and supplemental landscaping and supplemental screening such conditions that can be appropriate at this location, but the location of the lot and the need of the lot and the impact of the lot on the neighborhood is all established by this Municipalities Zoning Ordinance and what he is proposing is in full compliance of that ordinance.

Mr. Bruno asked Mr. Petry in addition to the Zoning Ordinance are you also in compliance with the tree ordinance and Mr. Petry responded yes we are. Mr. Trembulak asked if Mr. Petry could elaborate on that. Mr. Petry responded that the tree removal ordinance requires us to identify the trees that we are going to remove and it requires us to replant on site for those that we do remove and it gives a ratio and we have met that ratio.

Ms. Finnegan asked Mr. Petry if the ordinance mentions species type can you trade oaks for spruces and maples for foxwoods and Mr. Petry responded that you can trade species.

Mr. Gardner asked Mr. Petry to address some of the concerns that Mr. Marucci the Board Engineer have. Mr. Marucci states that the landscape plan does not appear to be adequate nor to buffer the parking lot residential properties along Ryerson Avenue. Mr. Gardner reads the comments from Mr. Marucci's letter about the concerns on the traffic on Ryerson Avenue and he is recommending that the southernmost driveway access to Ryerson Avenue be made a one way entrance only via to the campus. Mr. Petry responded that he has discussed this with his client and if that is a condition this Board is to propose on this application then they will be willing to accept that.

Mr. Gardner spoke about the comments from the Police Department and there were no comments except for where to park the construction equipment.

Mr. Gardner asked Mr. Petry if the tennis court parking spaces can be more than 62 spaces and eliminate the Ryerson Avenue Parking lot and Mr. Petry responded not without encroaching into the required yards. When the lot was developed they maximized the number of spaces without encroaching into the required yard.

Ms. Finnegan had questions on moving spaces in other areas.

Mr. Mihalik asked about the area near the mother house towards the ring Road on the West and Mr. Petry responded that there is a slope there and it can be done. He further testifies that in 1999 there was a master plan for the College and it identified areas as future building areas because they were within the ring Road and future educational area and he took them out of the equation because of that original study.

Ms. Finnegan responded that you are saving some possible parking areas for some future building that we heard is not going to be built and sacrificing the area in residential zones for parking and impacting that area.

Mr. Marucci responded that the board is looking at re-examining the Master plan in the entire Borough and the college is a very large part of the Borough and this board should know what the College plans are. The ring Road at the bottom is the most appropriate place to expand parking.

Mr. Marucci asked Mr. Petry if he was the Engineer for the College for the dormitories and Mr. Petry responded yes and the entrance on Bloomfield Avenue. Mr. Marucci testified that when the College came before the Board for the dormitories and the new entrance it was a given that the entrances on Ryerson Avenue were going to be closed and the main entrance was on Bloomfield Avenue. On the other side of Ryerson the Sisters built a new convent with parking and that was the Zoning Board and the Marion Manor has a parking lot so right now there should be no need for parking on Ryerson at all.

Discussion continued on the drainage in the tennis court.

Mr. Trembulak stated that the adjournment on this application will be continued at the next Planning Board meeting on July 9th at 7PM and no further notice will be provided.

Meeting is adjourned at 10:53PM by Ann Finnegan and seconded by Ann Martin.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa O'Neill
Planning Board Secretary