

Chair Perakis called the Regular meeting of the Troy City Planning Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. on April 23, 2024, in the Council Chamber of the Troy City Hall. Chair Perakis and Vice Chair Malalahalli presented opening remarks relative to the role of the Planning Commission and procedure of tonight’s meeting.

1. ROLL CALL

Present:

- Toby Buechner
- Carlton M. Faison
- Tyler Fox
- Michael W. Hutson
- Tom Krent
- David Lambert
- Lakshmi Malalahalli
- Marianna Perakis
- John J. Tagle

Also Present:

- R. Brent Savidant, Community Development Director
- Salim Huerta Jr., Commercial Project Collaborator
- Julie Quinlan Dufrane, Assistant City Attorney
- Kathy L. Czarnecki, Recording Secretary

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Resolution # PC-2024-04-019

Moved by: Faison
Support by: Fox

RESOLVED, To approve the as prepared.

Yes: All present (9)

MOTION CARRIED

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 9, 2024

Resolution # PC-2024-04-020

Moved by: Buechner
Support by: Lambert

RESOLVED, To approve the minutes of April 9, 2024 Regular meeting as submitted.

Yes: All present (9)

MOTION CARRIED

4. PUBLIC COMMENT – For Items Not on the Agenda

There was no one present who wished to speak.

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN

5. PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN APPROVAL (JPLN2023-0031) – Proposed Wattles Square Apartments, South side of Wattles and East of John R (PIN 88-20-24-100-039), Section 24, Zoned NN (Neighborhood Node “F”) Zoning District

Mr. Savidant provided background information on the Preliminary Site Plan application for Wattles Square Apartments. He addressed the intent of the Neighborhood Node “F” zoning district, how the application relates to the Master Plan and specific site design and building design attributes. Mr. Savidant said the application proposes a first true ‘garden style’ building concept where a portion of the ground floor is below grade. He said there was extensive dialogue between the administration and the applicant on building height, what constitutes a story and the Zoning Ordinance definition of a basement.

Mr. Savidant asked to go on record with an apology to the Planning Commission and to the applicant for some errors in the Planning Consultant report dated April 12, 2024. He stated the application itself is more compliant than what the report narrates. Mr. Savidant noted the application meets all parking requirements with an exception of adding a bicycle rack. He reported the parking lot island trees and tree replacement are compliant. Mr. Savidant noted the one row of landscaping proposed on the north side of the site would have to be removed for future right of way purposes.

Mr. Savidant reported the application does not meet the transparency requirements on the Wattles frontage and east and south facades. He noted though transparency requirements relate more to commercial use than residential use. He said the applicant is seeking Planning Commission approval to incorporate transparency alternatives, and the Planning Commission has the authority to grant flexibility of the transparency requirements. Mr. Savidant also reported there are safety concerns with the head-clearance of the first floor balconies and the lower level units below grade.

Mr. Savidant asked the Planning Commission to consider in its deliberations the following:

- Does the Planning Commission support the proposed transparency alternatives?
- Does the proposed garden level apartment style meet the Neighborhood Node design requirements?
- Does the Planning Commission support the proposed floor plans (including the community building), elevations and balcony clearance?

In summary, Mr. Savidant asked any approval to be subject to the applicant providing the required bicycle rack and to confirm transparency requirements (30%) on the south and east sides of the buildings. He said the Planning Commission may approve the transparency alternatives for the north elevation.

Some of the comments during discussion among the administration related to:

- Transparency requirements on all facades.
- Design and transparency requirements of front elevation in relation to right of way.
- Horizontal mixed use complies with the Neighborhood Node zoning district.
- Neighborhood Node zoning requirements with future adoption of the Master Plan.
- Safety concerns of balcony head-clearance and lower level units below grade.
- Confirmation that a flat roof is proposed for both buildings.
- Compliance of landscape requirements on north side with removal of landscaping along right of way.

Chair Perakis called a recess at 7:30 p.m. to allow the Information Technology department to resolve audio issues. Chair Perakis called the meeting back in session at 7:40 p.m.

Richard Atto, property owner of subject site and Rite Aid property to the west, introduced family members in the audience and project team members business partner Brian Najor, Landscape Architect Stacey Hadeed and Project Engineer Greg Bono. Mr. Atto gave a brief history of his family background and real estate/development career. He identified several design aspects he feels would be desirous of a potential resident that are incorporated in the development.

Mr. Atto said his short-term goal is to obtain a tenant for the vacant Rite Aid store and a long-term goal would be to potentially expand the development given any future changes in the Neighborhood Node zoning district.

Ms. Hadeed distributed handouts to the Planning Commission and gave a brief history of her career path. She addressed in detail the proposed development as relates to living units, building height and stories, landscaping, parking, traffic circulation, three dimensional views from several directional perspectives, roof design, elevations, outdoor amenities, transparency calculations, site design attributes, building materials and color scheme.

There was discussion, some comments related to:

- Parking, as relates to Rite Aid existing spaces, designated spaces for residents, walking distance to residential units.
- Proposed garden style units as relates to creativity, urban look, massing, unique design, low profile.
- Examples of similar apartment styles in the City with below grade lower level units.
- Community center amenities, as relates to arrangement of work-out area and social gathering space.
- Options to mitigate safety concerns of below grade lower level units and head-clearance of balconies.
- Transparency requirements; measures applicant could apply to meet requirements, consideration of alternative options.

- Approval of application would be conditioned on applicant combining the parcels, as noted on the site plan.
- Nonconforming status of vacant Rite Aid building as relates to Neighborhood Node zoning district if demolished and/or renovated.

Mr. Hutson stated he does not support the application because of the proposed below grade lower level units and floor plans.

Chair Perakis opened the floor for public comment.

- Susan Kuhn, 2172 E Wattles; addressed existing swampy land near Wayfarer Street connection to new homes on John R, parking, management of apartment complex.

Chair Perakis closed the floor for public comment.

Discussion continued among Board members on options applicant could take to mitigate safety concerns of the balconies, to mitigate safety concerns and install egress windows on below grade lower level units, to reconfigure floor space in the community center and to meet transparency requirements.

Mr. Najor said finding a good tenant to lease the Rite Aid property is a step in the right direction. He addressed the subjectivity of transparency requirements for residential use compared to commercial use. Mr. Najor said they will work with the City to mitigate any concerns discussed this evening and meet all code requirements for the egress windows and balconies to assure compliance.

Resolution # PC-2024-04-021

Moved by: Lambert

Seconded by: Faison

RESOLVED, That Preliminary Site Plan Approval, pursuant to Article 8 of the Zoning Ordinance, as requested for the proposed Wattles Square Apartments, located on the South side of Wattles, East of John R, Section 24, Zoned NN (Neighborhood Node “F”) Zoning District be postponed, for the following reasons:

1. To increase transparency on all sides of the units.
2. To address appropriate concerns on the first level balconies and lower level egress areas.
3. Add a bicycle rack.

Yes: All present (9)

MOTION CARRIED

Mr. Savidant informed the applicant of the specific transparency requirements for each elevation.

OTHER ITEMS

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – For Items on the Agenda

There was no one present who wished to speak.

7. **PLANNING COMMISSION COMMENT**

There were general Planning Commission comments, some comments related to:

- Master Plan focus; parking, neighborhood node districts, North Troy zoning district.
- Potential future development of former K-Mart Headquarters site.
- Availability of Commissioners to attend May 28, 2024 Regular meeting.

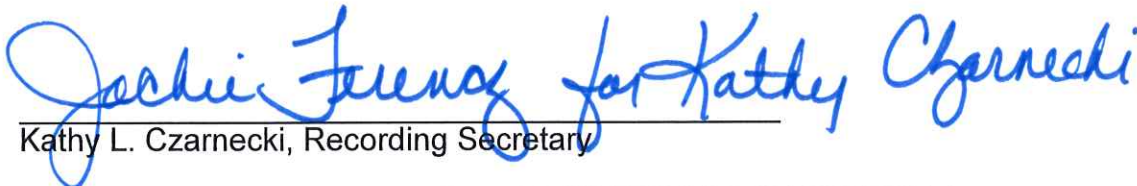
8. **ADJOURN**

The Regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marianna J. Perakis, Chair



Kathy L. Czarneski, Recording Secretary