

CITY OF CENTRAL FALLS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING +
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION
TO THE ZONING BOARD OF REVIEW



CASE 2016-07-29-1 (1000 BROAD STREET)



Summary

Application Type: Dimensional Variance

Address/AP/Ward: 1000 Broad Street and 35 Chestnut Street
Assessor's Plat 4, Lots 221 and 110
Ward 2

Applicant: Blackstone Valley Community Health Care, Inc., 35 East Avenue, Pawtucket, RI 02863

Property Owner: “

Parcel Size: 104,147 and 4,765 square feet

Zoning: C-2 and R-3

Project Description

The applicant is currently seeking Planning Board Approval for a Major Land Development to construct a new community health center at the rear of lot 221 and demolish the existing Notre Dame Hospital. The applicant is requesting a Dimensional Variance for three criteria: maximum height of the building increased from thirty (30) feet to fifty four (54) feet; required loading spaces reduced from three (3) to one (1); maximum width of the driveway on lot 110 increased from twelve feet (12) to twenty-four feet (24). The new structure will be located entirely on lot 221 (a C-2 zone) and approximately 47,000 square feet over four floors. The proposed loading area is on lot 221. The requested dimensional variance for the driveway is on lot 110 (an R-3 zone). The design of the project is similar to that of the BVCHC building at 35 East Avenue in Pawtucket.

Discussion

Staff feels two of the requested variances are not required:

Loading spaces are required for “each commercial and industrial enterprise of over 1,000 square feet of gross floor area in which commodities are sold, displayed, serviced, repaired, altered, or fabricated as the principal use of the enterprise...” Staff does not believe a community health center is defined in this fashion.

Driveway width is determined by use. As the existing and future use of lot 110 is access and parking for a community health center, staff believes this meets the definition of non-residential, which may have driveway widths of between twelve (12) and thirty (30) feet. The proposed driveway width of twenty-four (24) feet is within the permitted range.

The remaining requested dimensional variance is analyzed as follows:

Prior to approval of a dimensional variance, the Board is required to make positive findings on the following standards:

- (1) That the hardship from which the applicant seeks relief is due to the unique characteristics of the subject land or structure and not to general characteristics of the surrounding area; and not due to a physical or economic disability of the applicant;*

The required size of the building to meet the community health needs of the community is 47,000 square feet. In order to provide this program without seeking a dimensional variance for parking, the program must be accommodated over five stories, in order to provide optimal patient care. Three stories must have windows. To create a building more in line with regional architecture and better able to handle snow loads, a pitched roof was chosen as part of the design. This pitched roof also provides space for the necessary mechanical equipment. This unique design characteristic is responsible for the building height in excess of the permitted maximum

- (2) *That said hardship is not the result of any prior action of the applicant and does not result primarily from the desire of the applicant to realize greater financial gain.*

There is no evidence that the applicant's hardship is the result from prior action or the desire to realize greater financial gain as the community health center is not for-profit and is building an expanded community health center to meet the needs of Central Falls residents.

- (3) That the granting of the requested variance will not alter the general characteristic of the area or impair the intent or purpose of this zoning ordinance or the comprehensive plan for the city;

There are three structures in the immediate vicinity of this area that are in excess of the maximum permitted building height: The Learning Community, HASBRO, and OSRAM-Sylvania. The Learning Community exceeds fifty feet in height from its Chestnut Street elevation. The other two structures are large industrial complexes with a mix of single-story and multi-story structures. The BVCHC development will replicate this on a larger scale, as it will be a large structure surrounded by multi-story residential homes. Given the important community-scale activity located within the development, this is appropriate.



The Learning Community



HASBRO



OSRAM-Sylvania

The project was found consistent with the City's Comprehensive Plan by the Planning Board at their June 22, 2016 meeting as part of Master Plan Approval.

The applicant's proposed plan conforms to all other regulations in the City's Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the Zoning Ordinance includes "Promote the public health, safety, and general welfare (100A); Provide for a range of uses and intensities of use appropriate to the character of the city and reflecting current and expected future needs; (Section 100 B), and Provide for efficient review of development proposals, to clarify and expedite the zoning approval process (100 M)." The proposed structure will provide amenities increasing the city's public health in response to current and future needs.

(4) That the relief to be granted is the least relief necessary.

Approval of the proposed maximum height increase is the least relief necessary to fit the building program on the site without significant design sacrifices.

Recommendation

Based on the above discussion, staff believes that all standards have been met and recommends that the requested Dimensional Variance be granted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Friedrichs". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Peter Friedrichs
Director of Planning and Economic Development