

Village development plan presented for gallery property

By Michaela Kennedy

A public hearing for a major land development project at 61 Narragansett Ave. was the only agenda item free of controversy at the Planning Commission meeting Aug. 1. The other two reviews, one for a new construction in the Jamestown Shores, and the other an on-going downtown saga, deteriorated to shouting matches.

Applicants Allan and Nancy Randall, owners of Randall Art Gallery, want to move the corner building from Narragansett Avenue to the back of the property on Howland Avenue. John Murphy, attorney for the couple, explained a commercial building would be constructed facing Narragansett

Avenue.

The comprehensive community plan encourages mixed use, but requires a special permit, said Murphy. Both buildings on the same property constitute a mixed use. Also, planning approval is needed for construction in the downtown area. "No variances are required whatsoever for this plan," he added.

A physical alteration permit is required by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, as noted in a letter from the state.

The Randalls reported their "extensive survey of other buildings," were done to make sure their proposed building would fit in the village atmosphere. Some

of the structures immediately adjacent and in the surrounding area were as big as 11,000 square feet. "Ours is 4,000 square feet," Allan Randall said.

William Burgin, architect for the land development, showed renderings of the plan. John Lawless, professional engineer for the project, outlined a "robust" storm water management program, including cisterns on the property.

The public hearing closed with no questions or comments from the audience or the commission.

In other business, tempers rose as the Windridge Properties modified development plan on Clinton Avenue dragged on. Donald Packer, attorney representing

owner Jack Brittain, submitted a request for approval of shared parking for two spaces that do not fit on the property. A 4-foot catwalk will remain.

Brittain acknowledged that all storage in the attic would be put in the mechanical room. "Everything will come out of the attic," he said.

Commissioner Richard Ventrone argued that the applicant still had not submitted a list of what would be done about changes made to the original plan, or a requested parking easement. "It's not a done deal," he said. Parker countered that one was not required by the ordinance, "and is not normal procedure."

Commission Chairman Gary Girard said the easement was asked for in order to protect against a violation in the future if the agreement is no longer acceptable.

Packer continued that changes made were already shown on the revised site plan. He noted that the original plan did not show a crawl space, but appeared on the modified architectural plans, which were submitted to the town. "All issues were covered from the planner's memo," he said.

The town planner confirmed to the commission that the new property line required a Class A survey and an easement, as stated in the ordinance.

The commission also had asked for a fence to be built for a buffer and protection from foot traffic, but Brittain said abutter Edward Holland preferred no fence to be erected.

Brittain claimed he was never told by the building official that he needed the parking or the easement. He mentioned the shared parking agreement for the new town hall, as well as other downtown merchants. "This whole town has been affected by this building. I want to get on with my life, my business, my family," he said.

Commissioner Victor Calabretta stressed previous conversations about the request. "I couldn't have been more specific, you should reference the parking on the plan, as an easement." He stood firm on the easement, saying, "I will vote no, if a license is not provided."

Brittain, who had an agreement, but not an easement to share parking from abutter Holland, asked why he was singled out on the parking issue, and why he was

not allowed an amendment. "This is the first easement you've asked for in the town," he added.

Packer repeatedly asked the commission to vote on other modifications already made. He pointed out that other issues on the plan still needed to be resolved.

Commissioner Jean Brown encouraged commissioners not to argue one point, but to move ahead. Commissioner Michael White agreed, suggesting they try to make a decision on the rest of the list.

Town Solicitor Christopher Orton advised the board to be comfortable with the applicant's request. "The fact that you have two stamped plans with inconsistencies, the commission should have concerns," he warned. Orton also warned the commissioners that their charge was not to offer options of possibilities, but to approve what was presented.

John and Pam Bush of 20 Clinton Ave., abutters to the south, stood up to say they were perfectly happy with no fence or buffer, which would obstruct their driveway. In addition, they asked that the light erected near the property line be kept in order to cut down on vandalism. "We felt the light should be kept there. We think it's an asset to the neighborhood," said Pam Bush.

Girard, citing light restrictions listed in the zoning ordinance, responded, "We had an agreement to take down the light, so it (the requirement) stays."

The review of Jack's Electric amended site plan was again continued.

Tempers stayed hot for new business. Peter Brockmann, the attorney representing Martha Harris, introduced a development plan for a one-bedroom house at the corner of Frigate Street and Beacon Avenue. Applicant Martha Harris sought a 30-foot variance from the 150-foot wetlands setback.

Robert Cournoyer, engineer for the project, and Calabretta bickered over the drainage proposal. Calabretta suggested 16 inches of stone, where the plan showed six, and a holding area for excess runoff. "What we've accepted from everyone else is a perforated pipe," he added.

Cournoyer retorted the calculation was "ridiculous."

Calabretta questioned the elevation of wood chips spread over the property. Cournoyer dismissed the elevation as only two inches.

Brockmann noted that the plan for a 680-sq. foot construction could have been reviewed administratively, but the applicant chose to go before the board. The review was continued.

In the town planner's report, Bryer announced the downtown charrette, a public discussion about economic development in the village, would be scheduled for October, instead of September.

Fitness center offers new exercise classes

Members of Jamestown Fitness Center have been asking for exercise classes and the center's management has responded with a new series of programs.

Kettlebell classes are offered

with instruction from Russian kettlebell certified instructor, Will Fish. Kettlebells are cast iron weights that look like cannonballs with a handle. Russians have used them for centuries to

achieve extreme, all-round fitness and flexibility. U.S. military Special Forces including, Force Recon Marines, Secret Service Counter Assault, FBI Hostage Rescue Forces, and Navy Seals use kettlebells to improve their body composition, training and strength.

Two levels of kettlebell classes: an introduction to kettlebells and a kettlebells and more class are now offered.

A new August program called "Young at Heart," began Aug. 6 for those who are not as fit as they once were or not as fit as they want to be. This is a good class for those working with an injury and rehabilitating. The class will work on stability, strength and flexibility.

A rigorous "Boot camp" class begins Aug. 14 and is already more than half full. Boot camp will be held twice a week for four weeks and will jumpstart the fitness regime.

Yoga will be offered beginning in September.

These classes are for members of the fitness center. For membership information, call 560-0300.

Library closed for holiday

The Jamestown library will be closed Monday, Aug. 13, in honor of Victory Day.

The library's regular hours are Monday and Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Thursday 12 noon to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and summer Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, call the library at 423-7280 or visit the website at www.jamestownri.com/library.

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