

VVPA Minutes for February 19, 2008

Police report

No police report this month due to reporting officer's attendance at Mayor Healy's State of the City address occurring at the same time.

Jade Celatano, representative, Neighborhood Improvement Division (NID)

This organization addresses neighborhood problems; it is the office of the mayor's liaison. Problems such as noise, garbage and poorly-placed dog piles can be addressed through this organization.

Questions from attendees:

1. What is the city's position on litter? For example, is anything being done, or could be done, to reduce the litter blowing around the streets? Could more trashcans be added to the streets to help prevent litter?

The city provides street cleaning. Trashcans have had to be removed due to vandalizing, theft, etc. The organization advocates neighbor involvement to help curb the problem.

Suggestion from members: Contact schools to educate students about litter; have a city-sponsored poster contest to develop excitement among youngsters regarding litter prevention; install London-style trashcans where medal rims with clear plastic bags suspended from them are affixed to telephone poles, etc.

Comment from member: Situation is particularly bad at Palisade Avenue.

Neighbors must be responsible for keeping things neat and clean too.

2. Are there new garbage collection laws?

The summer of 2007 marked changes in trash collection. Collection varies by neighborhood. City-wide, trash shouldn't be put curbside prior to 7pm. For more details, contact the Incinerator Authority.

Mariah Silva, secretary VVPA, old business report

Last month's meeting featured the following speakers: Cpt. McDonough of the East District, Margaret O'Gorman of the NJ Wildlife Conservancy Project, Peter Brennan Councilman at Large for the JC City Council and Alice Deupree the architect for a new residence at corner of Wayne and Barrow. For more information, see January, 2008 VVPA minutes.

Jeffrey Furin, Treasurer's report

The VVPA balance as of 1/8/08 is roughly \$4,337. The VVPA just received 501(c)(3) status marking it officially a non-profit organization.

New members

The VVPA welcomes two new members.

Minutes submitted by Mariah Silva, secretary VVPA

Ron Russell, architect for 141 Bright Street (new bar/restaurant)

Mr. Russell was joined by Charles Harrington, attorney and Tom Parisi, property owner. They are proposing restoring the existing 2-story building located at the corner of Bright and Monmouth Streets, tearing down and rebuilding to the same height the adjoining 1-story building on Monmouth and erecting a new 3-story building in the currently vacant lot between the existing building and the school (years back, there had been a 4-story residence in this place). Commercial space for a restaurant would span the ground floor of all 3 structures, the 2nd story of the corner building would be reserved for restaurant dining, the 3-story structure would house a private dining room for the restaurant. The remaining space in the 3-story structure would house a 2 bedroom/2 bathroom residence with a large living/dining area. A high parapet would be installed on the roof to cover mechanical equipment blocking sight and sound to the street level. Cornices, brickwork and windows would be restored. Signage for the restaurant would be located on the Monmouth Street cornice. A covered entrance would also be built out on the Monmouth St. side eliminating the current corner entrance.

Questions from attendees:

1. What about parking?

Inspired by the Lighthouse Tavern in Paulus Hook; intended to be a neighborhood place therefore not much parking is required. There will be no parking provided; simply street parking.

2. What is the current building status? At what point in construction process?

The building is currently vacant. Right now getting community feedback on plans. Seeking historical and variance approval then make construction plans. Pending receiving approval, want to start construction immediately.

3. What are the variances you're seeking?

Expansion of non-conforming; lot and building coverage.

4. Will there be outdoor seating?

Yes, along Monmouth from entrance to stairs of residence and along Bright to end of property. Also intend on doing some planting and general beautifying.

5. Would you consider putting equipment on roof up higher?

Can't do this on building #1 as it's in the JC Downtown Historic district, can't do it on building #3 because the roof is too high to get things there, on building #2 there will be a 4 foot parapet with diffusers on either side to stop sound.

6. What kind of equipment?

HVAC, exhaust equipment.

7. Where is trash and delivery?

There is a basement hatch on Bright Street, a basement exit on Monmouth Street and a crawlspace in basement of building #3.

8. Will deliveries take away from street parking?

There will be no public spaces taken.

9. Are you keeping the windows?

Replacing current tinted windows with clear.

10. What is the name of the establishment?

The Brightside or Tommy's Brightside

11. Will there be a roof deck?

Not for commercial use; just for residents of building #3.

12. What is the total seating?

This will be based on building code. There are 2000 square feet on the ground level and 500 square feet on 2nd floor. Hopefully, there will be at least 100 seats.

Any additional questions or comments can be sent to the VVPA email (vvpa@mail.org) who will then forward them on to the architect. Plans can be found on the VVPA website.

Discussion: Jersey Ave. extension proposal, led by Tony Sandkamp, pres. VVPA

Recent study by Jersey City (can be found on VVPA website) to relieve downtown JC traffic congestion. One solution is to extend Jersey Avenue to link up with Audrey Zapp Drive in Liberty State Park adding a four-lane vehicular bridge in the process. There has been much opposition from downtown organizations. The VVPA has been asked to take a formal position.

One resident of Jersey Ave.: As the traffic is now, can't imagine more traffic flowing directly into this part of town. It's already bumper-to-bumper.

This would alleviate heavy traffic in Bergen-Lafayette section coming off exit 14B of the Turnpike.

There are obvious neighborhood concerns: traffic would cross traffic from a major hospital (and its emergency vehicles) and a large school (putting school children's safety at risk).

(Discussion was not fully concluded, although a vote was taken. Tony intended to reflect in a letter that more information was needed for the VVPA to take a stronger stand, but after the group discussion, the vote was: 2 in support of the proposal, 7 against, 3 abstaining.)

Announcements from members

The Grace Seniors (at Grace Van Vorst Episcopal Church, 2nd & Erie Streets) has exercise classes everyday from 10am to 2pm. Come for aerobics, weights, yoga and belly dancing.

Volunteer Saturday mornings at breakfasts for the needy.

Line Dancing at Grace Van Vorst – beginning Friday, February 1 from 6-8pm, \$7/adult, kids under 16 free; contact Joyce Davison: 201-659-2211/201-451-5107,

joycegdavison@hotmail.com; ALL WELCOME

The church always welcomes donations.