

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: 187-197 DIXWELL AVENUE. Special Exceptions to allow a community center and to allow 51 parking spaces where 313 spaces are required. Zone RM-2 (18-12-S) (Owner: City of New Haven Applicant: Giovanni Zinn)

REPORT: 1543-18

ADVICE: Approve Special Exception for Parking Reduction
Approve Special Exception for Use

BACKGROUND

The applicant is seeking a Special Exception to permit 51 parking spaces where 313 parking spaces are required. The applicant is also seeking a Special Exception to allow an approximately 53,130sf rebuilt Q House in an RM-2 district where such use is permitted by way of Special Exception. The proposed structure will include a youth and community engagement wing, a senior center, a library, a health clinic, and a gym/assembly space. Located on a currently vacant 110,000sf city-owned property at the corner of Foote Street and Dixwell Avenue it is (as it was in its previous form) designed to serve as the social service and community activity hub of the Dixwell neighborhood.

APRIL 10 PUBLIC HEARING

Giovanni Zinn, the applicant, appeared before the board. He is seeking to allow a use which is allowed by special exception as well as parking relief for the proposed site. He stated that the regulations would require a mundane amount of parking spaces and that the number they were able to achieve is sufficient in terms of what they predict the maximum amount of attendance to be.

Three members of the public spoke in favor of the application. A letter of support was also given by the Alder of this ward (22nd), Jeanette Morrison.

One member of the public spoke in opposition of the application in regards to parking.

Reverend Frederick Streets raised concerns over parking issues with the nearby Dixwell Church and asked for a possible agreement with the city to accommodate this concern.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- Special Exception-Use of the Proposed Site: The site is centrally located to serve the Dixwell neighborhood in a sizable lot that is rare for the city of New Haven, this use is allowed by special exception and is the site of the former "Q House" and would be making use of the same lot.
- Special Exception-Parking Nature of the Proposed Site: Existing traffic and parking patterns will not be significantly impacted based on the proposal with many patrons being local, the proximity to public transit and nearby parking lots, and centrality of the neighborhood.
- Resulting Traffic Patterns: The entrance to the site will be on Foote Street approximately 270 feet from the intersection at Dixwell Avenue; given the proximity to the Wexler/Grant School any overflow parking would be met by the parking provided at that location. The amount of parking being provided by the proposed plan along with neighboring public parking lots and parking garages, ensures a minimal impact to on-street parking despite the request for relief. The property also has access to public transportation.
- Nature of the Surrounding Area: The site is in an RM-2 District along with the surrounding area extending in a North-South orientation which consists mostly of multi-family residential. Across the street to the west of the site, on Dixwell Avenue, is a BA (General Business) District which consists of commercial uses. Daniel Stewart Plaza is located within the project area, at 195 Dixwell Avenue, along with other green, public spaces.
- The Comprehensive Plan: New Haven Vision 2025, in its Housing and Neighborhood Planning Section refers specifically to the need for a "new Q House".

ADVICE

The Commission has reviewed the summary of the public hearing and the information of the BZA staff report and finds the request satisfies the Special Exception requirements of Section 63(d) and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: April 18, 2018
Leslie Radcliffe
Vice Chair

ATTEST: 
Michael Piscitelli, AICP
Deputy Economic Development Administrator