



# City of Racine

City Hall  
730 Washington Ave.  
Racine, WI 53403  
www.cityofracine.org

## Meeting Minutes - Final

### Planning Heritage and Design Commission

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Monday, December 2, 2024

4:30 PM

City Hall, Room 205

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#### Call To Order

*Mayor Mason called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.*

**PRESENT:** 5 - Mayor Mason, Hefel, Kohlman, Peete and Chambers

**EXCUSED:** 1 - Jones

#### Approval of Minutes for the November 18, 2024 Meeting.

A motion was made by Alder Peete, seconded by Hefel, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2024 meeting. The motion **PASSED** by a Voice Vote.

#### 4:30 P.M. PUBLIC HEARINGS

[1084-24](#)

**Subject:** Consideration of a request from Daniel Peterson of Hostak, Henzl & Bichler S.C., representing Rev. Stanley Hunter of the First Church of God, for a rezoning of the property at 1650 Russet Street from R3 Limited General Residence District to O-I Office/Institutional District as allowed by Sec. 114-77 of the Municipal Code.

#### **Recommendation of the Planning, Heritage and Design**

**Commission on 12-02-2024:** That based on the required findings of fact the request from Daniel Peterson of Hostak, Henzl & Bichler S.C., representing Rev. Stanley Hunter of the First Church of God, for a rezoning of the property at 1650 Russet Street from R3 Limited General Residence District to O-I Office/Institutional District be approved and that ZOrd.0005-24 rezoning the property at 1650 Russet Street from R3 Limited General Residence District to O-I Office/Institutional District be adopted.

**Fiscal Note:** N/A

**Attachments:**     [Review and Recommendation](#)  
[Draft ZOrd.0005-24](#)  
[Public Hearing Notice](#)  
[Applicant Submittal](#)  
[#ZOrd. 0005-24 - 1650 Russet Street](#)

*Michelle Cook, Associate Planner, introduced the request for rezoning of the property at 1650 Russet Street. She displayed the aerial photo and public hearing notification area. She stated the property in question is requesting rezoning to operate as a standalone group daycare center. Cook explained that in the current zoning district for the property, R3 Limited General Residence, a daycare can only be operated in conjunction with a religious institution, educational facility, etc. and changing the zoning to OI Office/Institutional would allow for a group daycare with the application and approval of a conditional use permit.*

*Cook displayed maps of the current zoning, land use designation, and photos of the property and surrounding area. Cook explained the application summary for the rezoning of the property, described the possible actions of the commission, and reviewed the five required findings of fact for recommending approval of rezonings. She stated that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning and adoption of Zoning Ordinance ZOrd.0005-24 which would rezone the property from R3 – Limited General Residence District to OI – Office/Institutional District.*

*Alder Peete asked about the age group for the daycare and asked if this were approved, what other uses could be approved at the property.*

*Cook stated that it would be a child daycare center, however, the application would have to return to the commission for review and approval of a conditional use permit. Cook stated mainly office uses would be approved at this location.*

*Hintz stated that offices are allowed, but anything along the lines of retail sales would not be. He stated anything that would produce substantial traffic would not be allowed in this zone district. He stated there are eight items listed under permitted uses in this zone district.*

*Mayor Mason opened the public hearing at 4:39 p.m.*

*Daniel Peterson, Milwaukee, WI, the agent for the applicant spoke regarding the request. He complimented the commission on the presentation of the application and stated that the request would be for the continued use of a daycare at this location. He explained that the request would preserve the condition of the neighborhood and stated they were present to answer any questions.*

*Mayor Mason closed the public hearing at 4:42 p.m.*

**A motion was made by Peete, seconded by Hefel, to recommend adoption of ZOrd.0005-24 rezoning the property at 1650 Russet Street from R3 – Limited General Residence to OI – Office/Institutional. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.**

[1085-24](#)

**Subject:** Consideration of a request from Robert Watring, representing Wa-Zar, for a conditional use permit for a multi-family residence at 801

Wisconsin Avenue as allowed by Sec. 114-428 of the Municipal Code.

**Attachments:**     [Review and Recommendation](#)  
                              [Public Hearing Notice](#)  
                              [Applicant Submittal](#)

*Jeff Hintz, Assistant Director, explained the request. He reviewed the aerial photo, zoning, and land use maps for the property and surrounding area. He stated that the majority of the property surrounding the subject site is B4 – Central Business District. Hintz explained this request also considers a design review since it is in the downtown design review area and is a contributing building to the Southside Historic District.*

*Hintz stated that the zoning of the property is OI – Office/Institutional. He stated the land use designation for the property is governmental/institution and showed photos of the site and surrounding area. He stated that both the Gorton Hall and the church buildings on the site are listed as contributing properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The buildings share the same parcel.*

*Hintz showed the site plan for the building. He stated the footprint would change a little bit from what is currently on the site and showed the renderings for the proposed project. He stated the front part of the building will remain as Gorton Hall with no proposed changes, however, a seven-story addition would be added that would mimic the same style of the building which would total 18 apartments for seniors. Hintz showed the elevation drawings and floor plan for the proposed development. He explained that, at this time, the church building would not be used for the proposed development. He stated that the majority of the addition would be on the back portion of the building (Gorton Hall).*

*Hintz explained the application summary and the possible actions of the commission for conditional use permits. He stated that, in terms of the conditional use. He explained the difference between the B4 district and OI in terms of the parking requirements. He stated that B4 – Central Business District has no parking requirements whereas the OI – Office/Institutional District does. He stated there is very limited on street parking availability in the area. He stated there are two floors on Gorton Hall and the entirety of the church building that does not have any uses at all and once those buildings have a use in them there will be some sort of parking demand that comes along with the potential use. Hintz explained that, based on the City's parking requirements, just the dwelling units that are being proposed with this application would require 27 parking spaces. He stated what is being provided with the application is 19 spaces and 40-60 additional spaces may be needed for the unused floors of Gorton Hall and the entire former religious facility would have no off-street parking availability. He explained that the off-street parking is already challenging in the area since the B4 zoning district does not have off-street parking requirements.*

*Hintz continued to explain the required findings of fact for approval of conditional use permits. He stated that lack of parking can be detrimental to the area at times and the on-street parking can be injurious to the area. He explained there are parking issues when there are court cases in the area and having people permanently in the spaces when they need to be utilized could be problematic. He stated adding square footage to the building without accommodating parking could be detrimental to the surrounding area.*

*He explained the additional findings regarding traffic congestion and other*

*requirements, as attached to this agenda item.*

*Hintz stated that if this were approved an exception for parking would need to be granted, if an exception is not granted, the proposal does meet the requirements of the zoning ordinance.*

*Hintz explained that the property is also located in our downtown area design district and in an historic district so there are considerations related to historic preservation and design review. He pointed to page 14 of the City's design guidelines which state to use "architectural contrast wisely". He stated that the proposed building, in terms of massing, is generally consistent with the downtown area, however, the turrets on the building are a radical difference from the architecture of the surrounding area. The building also does not appear to separate a top, middle, and bottom as recommended in the design guidelines. He stated in terms of historic preservation, the Secretary of the Interior publishes "Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties" which provides guidance for the treatment of exterior additions to historic buildings. The preservation brief provided in these standards state that a new addition should preserve significant historic materials, features and form; be compatible; and be differentiated from the historic building. It also provides that a rooftop addition should not be more than one story in height to minimize its visibility and its impact on the proportion and profile of the historic building. He stated the proposed addition with its height will be highly visible and the property does appear to support or encourage the addition of this scale on a historic building.*

*Hintz explained that based on the required findings of fact and the design criteria staff is recommending that the request be denied.*

*Brief discussion ensued regarding clarification on the parking requirements. Hintz clarified that 27 spaces would be required for the proposed use and a potential 40-60 spaces would be required for the unused portion of the space, depending on its potential future use.*

*Hefel asked if the applicant is proposing a senior living facility or senior apartments.*

*Hintz stated it would be apartments.*

*Peete stated that in the particular area it seems like it could get congested pretty fast without the necessary parking.*

*In response to Peete, Mason stated that the property is a contributing property in the Historic District (Southside Historic District).*

*Kohlmann asked about the parking requirements. He stated he thinks the streetscape is important as well. He stated the turrets do not match the architectural design and do not match the historic area.*

*Mayor Mason opened the public hearing at 5:11 p.m.*

*Robert Watring, 5710 4th Avenue, Kenosha, WI, the applicant, spoke regarding the request. He explained the parking and stated there are six designated spots and was approved several years ago for one car per unit. He believes the parking problem has been solved. He stated the building has great potential and explained that people 55 and older like to be within walking distance of restaurants and shopping areas. He*

*explained that the development would be good for the citizens, the City, and the downtown area and stated he was available for questions.*

*Mason asked if Watring considered renovating the building as it is, in its current form.*

*Watring stated it would be such a huge expense, and the building was designed for a mixed use. He stated this was the best option to put money back into the building.*

*Robert Wirch, 3007 Spring Brook Road, State Senator from Pleasant Prairie, WI, spoke regarding the request. He stated that he was there to give a general endorsement for the project because of the housing crisis in Southeastern Wisconsin. He stated he gets calls in his office all the time from families looking for housing. He thinks 18 apartments would be a good step forward in addressing this crisis.*

*Yolanda Adams, 5717 35th Avenue, Kenosha, WI, spoke regarding the request. She spoke in support and stated she toured the building and the site and is excited about the renovation of part of this historic building and what it could do for the city of Racine. This is a project that is going to draw seniors to the downtown area. She explained the developments of Mr. Watring's in Kenosha. She stated he has investors waiting and all he needs is approval. She stated seniors will understand that there will be one parking per unit and many seniors take public transportation, walk, or bike. She does not see a problem with parking and what may happen to the property down the road should not stop what can happen today. She stated the building is in a key area in the downtown and would be nice to see the building filled with tenants and brought back to life.*

*Mayor Mason closed the public hearing at 5:22 p.m.*

**A motion was made by Hefel, seconded by Kohlmann, to deny the request based on the required findings of fact. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.**

## **END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS**

[1086-24](#)

**Subject:** Consideration of a request from Tesa Santoro, representing JT Eats LLC, for review and approval of facade changes and a facade grant for 501 Sixth Street.

**Attachments:**    [Recommendation](#)  
                              [Design Review Checklist](#)  
                              [Applicant Submittal](#)

*Cook explained the request and stated this item is a design review along with a façade grant. She showed the aerial photo of the property and explained that it used to be Henry and Wanda's. Cook explained the façade improvement proposed by the applicant and stated that staff is recommending approval of façade grant funds for the storefront and painting of the window trim and non-brick surfaces. She stated staff is recommending that funds not be used to paint any of the brick surfaces on the building due to the technique that is proposed to be used and how the paint has already damaged the cream brick of the building.*

*Cook explained the materials for the storefront and the paint colors that would be used. She stated that staff is recommending approval of the request subject to conditions a. – e. Cook reviewed the conditions of approval.*

*Mason explained the potential deterioration that can take place when cream brick is painted. He stated that, with our façade grants, we do not want to encourage painting of brick buildings that may lead to the building's demise.*

*Commissioners discussed the painting of the building and recommended that, due to the condition of the exterior, the building's paint color could be changed to the color presented by the applicant and that the brick could be repainted. However, façade grant funds would not be allowed to be used to paint the brick exterior of the building.*

**A motion was made by Hefel, seconded by Kohlmann, to approve the request subject to conditions a. – e. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.**

[1087-24](#)

**Subject:** Consideration of a request from Jeanne Dernehl for review and approval of facade changes and a facade grant for 234 Main Street.

**Attachments:**    [Recommendation](#)  
                              [Design Review Checklist](#)  
                              [Applicant Submittal](#)

*Cook explained the request and showed the aerial and photo of the site. She explained that the façade improvements include painting the windowpane and replacing the paneling with Hardy panels, removing the sign band, and replacing the trim. She showed the different paint colors that the applicant is proposing and stated that they will not be painting the cream brick.*

*Discussion ensued about the façade improvements. Cook stated that the applicant is not proposing to update any of the windows, however, the building will have some façade grant funding available since the lowest bids came in at \$8434.40. Cook stated that staff is recommending approval subject to conditions a. – e. She reviewed the conditions of approval pointing out that condition c. states that no painting of brick surfaces is approved.*

**A motion was made by Hefel, seconded by Kohlman, to approve the request subject conditions a. – e. The motion PASSED by a Voice Vote.**

**Adjournment**

*There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.*