

Memorandum
Department of Planning and Development
Planning Division



To: Chair Delogu and Members of the Portland Planning Board
From: Rick Seeley, Senior Planner, GPCOG
Date: July 8, 2004
Re: July 20, 2004 Planning Board Meeting
Maine Medical Center Contract Zone
(Building Addition, Helipad, Parking Garage, and Central Utility Plant
Vicinity of Bramhall, Charles, Wescott, Ellsworth, Crescent, Gilman and
Congress Streets

Activities and Submissions Since the June 8, 2004 Planning Board Workshop

Revised Draft Contract Zone Agreement

Since the June 25th Planning Board workshop, in response to the Board’s discussion of the draft Agreement at that workshop, and a subsequent meeting of MMC and City planning and legal staff, MMC’s attorney Chris Vaniotis has submitted a revised draft showing changes, and the City’s attorney Penny Littell has prepared a revised draft in response which shows proposed additional changes. Penny Littell’s revised draft is included as Attachment 1 to this memo. The draft Agreement in Attachment 1 is written so that most conditions of the Agreement are to be supported with further specifics in the Site Plan in its final approved form, referred to as Exhibit A in the Agreement language, while other documents to be included as supporting agreement provisions on helicopter flight routes, use of the helipad and the landscaping of the Vaughan Street parking lot, are listed as Exhibits, B, C and D. respectively.

Exhibit A Document List

A specific list of documents to be included in Exhibit A has been developed by staff and is included in Attachment 2.

Building Elevations

Ultimately, the building elevations, in their final form, will become part of Exhibit A of the Contract Zone Agreement (the Site Plan). It is the staff’s opinion, now that the draft elevations have been submitted at a large enough scale to show detail, and while the Contract Zone Agreement is still being negotiated, that now is the time to begin work on resolving the design issues relative to these elevations with the aim of resolving most, if not all of them in time for the public hearing on the draft Agreement. This approach will

help to provide the City Council, the applicants, the neighbors and the public as clear a picture as possible of the hospital improvements that the City will be agreeing to with its approval of the contract zone agreement.

Since the June 25, 2004 Planning Board workshop, the applicant's architects and City staff have met to review revised building elevations for the proposed new parking garage and central utility plant drawn up in response to the Board's comments and City staff comments in the June 8, 2004 workshop staff memo. Below is a summary listing of changes. Staff has requested replacement elevation renderings for inclusion in the Attachment 3 notebook, Tabs 6 and 8, and requested that the applicant bring the new proposed building elevations to the July 20th workshop. Elevations for Charles Street Addition remain unchanged as no changes were requested.

Parking Garage

The final proposed design for the parking garage and elevation plans showing it are still being worked out at this writing by the applicant and their architects. On July 6th staff met with them to review a conceptual elevation plan that they say will ultimately include some form of brick veneer panel insets to the outer walls of the parking decks above the first story. This would wrap around the east and to some yet to be defined extent around the west façade of the garage as well. Also shown in the concept plan is some limited fenestration in the stair/elevator towers serving the proposed and existing garages, with only small windows at the landings looking out across Congress Street and, in the case of the east end stair tower, with larger but still not floor to ceiling fenestration on the east façade looking up Congress Street. No fenestration appeared in the concept to allow a view in or out from the stairs themselves or the inner landings. For comments from the City's Parking Manager, John Peverada, concerning the security implications of limited fenestration and other internal garage design elements see Attachment 4.

The stair and elevator towers would also have some brick veneer panel accenting. The tops of these towers would be flat and have a cantilevered couple of top layers of brick coloration extending to the west as shown in the concept. There will be metal caps consistent with this shape and color that will be removable for re-use when the height extension authorized by the contract, subject to site plan review, is constructed.

Pedestrian pick up/drop off areas, recommended in the June 8th staff memo are not part of the concept design. The applicants have grave concerns about ever directing or encouraging patients to consider such areas for pick up or drop off, when they are designing a new hospital entrance area up in the Bramhall neighborhood and they say they will provide patients with detailed directions to the new entrance for pick up or drop off when scheduling patient visits.

The applicants have also submitted a rendering of two alternate plans for using the new parking garage and its stairways and/or elevator to create a year round pedestrian access link between the campus and Congress Street. If either of these routes were to be created it would be in addition to the Crescent Street to Congress Street stairway about two houses up from the east end of the new garage. One of these routes would sacrifice six parking spaces on the ground level to make room for a stairway opposite the Congress Street entrance booth to reach the first level above, which is the lowest level served by the elevator. From the top level of the elevator in Phase I, the level of the Crescent Street garage entrance, pedestrians entering the hospital campus would walk the length of the top level to exit at the Crescent St. entrance. And those moving from the campus to Congress Street would follow the same route in reverse, also crossing the length of the top level in the vehicular travel lane. In the second method, pedestrians would enter on the right side of the Crescent Street entrance and proceed within the vehicular curve at the east end of the garage to the top of the proposed east end stairwell and descend six flights to the door exiting onto Congress Street at the bottom. The door would be modified to allow ingress in addition to egress, which is the only direction of travel presently proposed.

The final proposed renderings will reveal whether or in what way the remaining requests of the Planning Board and recommendations of City staff have or have not been incorporated into the final design for the parking garage. These included additional wall-mounted light fixtures along the Congress Street façade, banners to emphasize the garage's entrance and relationship to the hospital, modified grillwork to more clearly link the visual image of the garage to the new Charles Street addition design, and improvements to the landscaping and fencing and façade treatment at the ground level link between the two garages that faces Congress Street.

Parking Garage, Crescent Street Entrance

An elevation drawing of how this entrance and the related façade, on either the east side facing the neighborhood or the south side, facing the emergency department entrance, the Richards Wing, the Bean Building and the new Charles Street addition has not yet been submitted – although the an elevation concept was presented for the east end. Staff is still requesting, but has not yet received, elevations drawings showing an elevation view of the Crescent Street entrance and the southeastern corner of the new parking garage. What specific design elements such an elevation view will show, will depend at least in part on the Planning Board's guidance at the July 20th workshop.

The application describes but the concept elevation does not show shielding on the upper stories to limit headlight glare onto neighboring residential uses, unless this is the normal height wall for each level. This shield should be shown in the elevation view requested.

Central Utility Building

The applicant has provided a more complete rendering of a revised proposed elevation view of the Central Utility Plant. The latest version shows the addition of a brick façade covering the lower, larger mass of the building, with white elements mimicking the design proportions of the windows on the Charles Street addition and carrying the existing architectural theme of white banding on the Bean Building, and to a lesser extent, the Richards and Maine General buildings, through the utility plant as well. The “windows” are not actual windows but they outline the sets of louvers seen in the previous designs. Below the brick façade at ground level is a visible cast-in-place concrete foundation. Add above the brick façade is a silver or gray metal panel equipment housing of similar proportions to the previous design. In front, a double row of spruce trees of the same species that is now present on the same side of Gilman Street further up the hill are proposed. This will eventually provide better screening than the single row shown on the new elevation, which is understated to allow the Board to see the façade as well. However, it is not clear when these new trees will attain the height necessary to screen as high as those shown either. The plant stack, a section of metal panel and a small portion of brick façade are visible at the end of the short driveway on the uphill end of the utility plant. Unfortunately the existence of the driveway makes screening next to impossible at that point along the façade. Staff has asked the applicants to take another look at how they can improve that portion of the design to reduce its visual impact.

The addition of the brick façade can happen only if the Contract Zone Agreement allows it to. This feature has been added to the draft Agreement. The existing zoning needing modification is the 10-foot minimum setback from the Gilman Street ROW, to allow approximately 1 foot of encroachment on the minimum setback requirement in this location. The brick will be cosmetic and the underlying purpose of the building and noise control requires retaining the metal panel and noise barrier skin within the brick.

Staff have also pointed out that the landscaping can encroach somewhat into the public ROW if need be to provide ample screening of the façade. However, there may be some distinct limits to this potential as there is presently an overhead electric line running along the edges of Gilman Street.

Recording Plat

The applicant continues to prepare a proposed recording plat to show all land transactions associated with the vacation and relocation of streets and the transfers of land between Gilman Street and the Western Prom. If it is submitted in time for inclusion in the Planning Board packets, staff will include copies for Board members. A list of transactions has been requested, keyed to locations on the plan.

Parking Study and Traffic Study

These two documents may need revision in response to data requested by Tom Errico related to the Traffic Study (see Attachment 5), and by John Peverada related to the Parking Study (see Attachment 6).

Landscaping Plan Professional Review

City Arborist and Superintendent of Parks, Jeff Tarling, has reviewed the proposed landscape plans for this project with the applicant and developed a memo containing his findings and recommendations, included as Attachment 7.

Exhibit D

Landscape Plan for the Vaughan Street lot. As part of his professional review of the Landscape plans, Jeff Tarling has also reviewed the draft landscape plan for Vaughan Street lot which will be further revised by Sebago Technics in response to the review. In addition to the plan view presented, staff also requested elevation views from street level. See Attachment 8.

Contract Zone Map

The map of the area subject to contract rezoning under the agreement remains to be determined by the Planning Board. No new maps have been submitted beyond those included in Attachment 3, Tab 3.

Housing Replacement Plan

The applicants have submitted a housing replacement plan, Attachment 3, Tab 15, and Wendy Cherubini, the City's Housing and Community Development Manager has reviewed the plan and visited the property proposed for re-conversion from MMC administration offices to a residential structure containing 2 dwelling units, located at 325-327 Brackett Street near the present hospital entrance. Her review memo, which includes some proposed conditions of approval pertaining to the timing of housing replacement, the minimum time period for re-converted units to remain as residential units, and CPI-adjusted fee amounts for the 7 other dwelling units and 2 rooming units to be replaced, for payment into the City's Housing Development Fund (amounts have risen slightly) is included as Attachment 9.

Recall that Conditional Use approval is needed for use that is to occupy the space previously occupied by the housing that is being replaced, and that therefore the new parking garage will be subject Conditional Use review by the Planning Board.

Future Expansions

The City has still not received estimates of how many additional patients, visitors, employees, and contractors these future expansions are likely to generate and how this translates into parking demand and traffic impacts in relation to new parking capacity in the expanded new garage. Should the Agreement allow for these expansions subject to site plan review as presently drafted or should the contract agreement itself be revisited when the time comes, in addition to requiring site plan review and other related approvals?

Helicopter Noise

A report entitled *Proposed Helicopter Pad Noise Mitigation* has been submitted, Attachment 10. The City's noise consultant, Bob Miller, has not yet completed noise study and mitigation plan peer review. Staff are trying to secure his report and his attendance at the July 20, 2004 Planning Board workshop. Should Mr. Miller's report become available in time for inclusion in your packet, on the morning of July 16th, it will be included in each Board member's packet. [Rick, hopefully you can rewrite this paragraph to eliminate the "trying to secure" language. If we don't get the report in time, try to edit this somehow with an update of the status of his review.]

Public Improvement Needs

The Public Works Director has submitted a list of needs for the Planning Board to consider in selecting public improvements to be funded by Maine Medical Center under paragraph 14 of the draft Contract Zone Agreement. This list is contained in Attachment 10, a memo from Michael Bobinsky.

Letter from Neighborhood Council Members to MMC President Vincent Conti.
Attachment 11.

List of Attachments

1. Draft Contract Zone Agreement, Maine Medical Center, July 8, 2004
2. Email from Rick Seeley to Paul Gray, June 25, 2004, Re: Exhibit A
3. May 14, 2004 notebook submission, with supplements to date: Application for Zoning Amendment, Comprehensive Submittal Package, May 2004.
4. Email from Rick Seeley to Paul Gray, May 25, 2004, Re: parking questions raised by John Peverada.
5. Email from Tom Errico to Rick Seeley, July 8, 2004, Re: Traffic Study review information needs
6. Email from John Peverada to Rick Seeley, July 7, 2004, Re: Parking/Security Concerns
7. [Not yet received] Landscape Plan Professional Review Memo by Jeff Tarling.
8. [Not yet received] Landscape Plan for Vaughan Street Lot, Sebago Technics.
9. Housing Replacement Plan Review Memo by Wendy Cherubini, July 5, 2004
10. Memo on Public Improvement Needs, Michael Bobinsky, July 8, 2004
11. Letter from Neighborhood Council to Vincent Conti, forwarded by email from George Silverman to Alex Jaegerman with request for submittal to Planning Board.