

EAST AURORA PLANNING COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING

July 2, 2008

7:00 PM

Present: Dan Castle, Chairman  
Stacy Oar  
Laura Mehl  
Donald Wynes  
Alternate, Bud Babcock  
Carol Smith – (Newest member to be appointed 7/21/08)  
Code Enforcement Officer, Bill Kramer  
Deputy Clerk, Sue Wolff

Absent: Lowell Dewey  
Randy West

Others Present:  
Christine Peters Roycroft Campus Corporation  
Michael Lennon, Archt. with Flynn Battaglia Architects, PC  
Vincent Hanley, Atty. with Jaeckle Fleischmann & Mugel, LLP  
Dana A. Dylewski, property owner for 37 South Grove St.

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**Review of Development Plan for Roycroft Power House  
@ 39 South Grove St.**

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Chairman, Dan Castle called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM

Laura Mehl moved the minutes of June 18, 2008 meeting be approved. Dan Castle seconded the motion, which was then followed by a unanimous vote to approve.

Chairman, Dan Castle spoke to the Planning Commission members and explained that it was a little bit more complicated than a normal site plan review, since the applicant needed to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for variances. Because of these variance requests the Planning Commission has several options tonight, Dan went on to explain, either we can review, make comments, make a recommendation pending on the ZBA approval or could do all review, ask questions and wait until next month after the ZBA has either granted or denied requested variances. If variance is denied, the development plan will most likely change, so further review would then become necessary Dan explained.

Dan then asked Code Enforcement Officer, Bill Kramer to explain if any other Commissions, Committees have reviewed the Power House development plans and what has or will be considered. Bill explained that the Zoning Board of Appeals will be meeting on 7/17/08 to hear a variance request for rear & side yards. Bill went on to explain that the property on the south side (45 South Grove St. owners, Nicholas & Julie Kostelny) is very close and the rear portion of the proposed building is within inches of property at 37 South Grove St. owners, Dana & Chester Dylewski.

Bill also mentioned that the owners of 45 South Grove St. have submitted a letter requesting a 6' fence be put up along property line to shield the lights of the vehicles when parking in the lot at the Power House.

Dan Castle asked applicant Christine Peters to walk the Planning Commission through the development plan and explain.

Christine spoke to the Planning Commission members and gave a brief look into the background/history of the Roycroft Campus, once finished Christine would turn it over to Architect, Michael Lennon who would then speak about the actual development plan.

Christine explained how the last major building (The Power House) was built in 1910, which provided heat & electricity underground to all the buildings on the campus. In the fall of last year 2007 a new water line was installed and many of those old pipes that once supplied heat & electricity were unearthed. In 1997, 11 years ago, there was a major fire that destroyed the Power House (owned at that time by attorney Neil Jacobus). The building was sold thereafter to Dan Murray, and in 2003 there was a winter storm with significant snowfall which collapsed the roof and most of the remaining structure. Since they are trying to restore the Roycroft Campus and bring it back to its original state in programming to when Elbert Hubbard & the Roycrofters were there, Christine went on to explain that when approached by Dan Murray to see if they would be interested in purchasing the property of the once Power House, they said yes, and in October 2005 the building was purchased by the Roycroft Campus Corp. The Corp. presently owns the Copper Shop and the Power House, and in 1986 all the buildings on the Roycroft Campus were designated a National Landmark. Christine went on to explain that when they are working with these properties & looking for government grants, first of all the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has to give their approval. Locally the Historic Preservation Committee and then of course the Planning Commission and Village Board all of which have to give their approval. Once the Roycroft Campus is restored, it will be a big economic benefit to the Village, County and Western New York as a whole.

Christine went on to explain that in the summer of 2007 they went to the Historic Preservation Commission and asked for approval for the deconstruction of the two remaining walls of the building and to take down 30 layers of the chimney. They have been in the process of raising money to restore the power house and copper shop. Price for the restoration of the Power House is \$3 million and the Copper Shop is \$1.5 million along with enhancing the Roycroft Campus on the whole with an additional \$1.5 million.

Architect, Michael Lennon discussed the intent of the project which is to replace as it once was in the same era. They were in hopes they could incorporate the North wall as part of structure but because of the toll the 11 years had taken on the remainder of the building not much can be salvaged. A small piece of the corner, where the original coal bin once was is salvageable, but that is about all. Even the chimney that remains is only going to be used as a template.

Dan Castle asked what the original height was on the chimney. Michael replied it was a coal burner and was 83' in height.

The blocks that were salvageable from the removal of the chimney can be reused and will probably take them to the ridge line of the building, then they will cap it off with a concrete platform and build an oil derrick or steel frame at the top, after that is complete, terra cotta will be hung into place, making it much lighter in weight and less expensive. Other than that, the exterior of the building will be virtually a replica of the original. The roof structure will be made to accommodate additional insulation, but will still look like the original. The porch on the front of the building is being shown as a glass enclosed structure, which is still being discussed, original was an open porch. Another change will be stairs located in the back of the building. Original building was a story and a half. New will be a full two-story building. The second

story will be a room for public assembly and will accommodate approximately one hundred, which is the reason for the second set of stairs in the southwest corner of the building. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will allow the structure to be moved to the East a bit but if they would do that, they would be faced with moving the new waterline as well.

Chairman Dan Castle questioned Michael what the final recommendations from SHPO was. Michael said SHPO is happy with this plan. Inside could vary but outside should be kept as closely as possible to original character.

Dan inquired if the chimney of 83' would require a variance for height, to which Code Enforcement Officer, Bill Kramer replied no.

Alternate, Bud Babcock wondered if the chimney would be usable or only for architectural reasons. Michael said the chimney would serve a mechanical purpose as ducts for intake & exhaust of gases. Bud then asked if the gases would be emitted at the top of chimney to which Michael replied no, about half way up. The top vent or light panel would serve as a soft light, not a beacon, just a soft light to be used during the evening hours.

Carol Smith asked how heavy the blocks were and how they were hung. Michael mentioned that the blocks were put on a steel frame that would also incorporate a series of hangers or clips that the blocks would literally hang on, with gasket units in between them to help with air circulation and should prevent clattering when the wind blows. Carol then asked how heavy a chimney block actually weighed. Michael said approximately 20 lbs per block, once masonry is added it would triple the weight on a square foot basis.

Member Laura Mehl questioned the parking lot. Michael replied they are looking into the master plan of the campus but for right now the parking lot between the Inn and the Power House would remain the same, at the same location. He also went on to explain that the proposed Power House site plan has no gutters. At this point in time water runoff would drain into the ground as it always has, but hopefully down the road we will be able to connect with a storm sewer, possibly by acquiring additional property and connecting into the Walnut St. storm sewer.

Laura Mehl mentioned that she was questioning the parking lot behind the building site. Michael replied that it was a driveway and not a parking lot.

Carol questioned the lighting on the building. Michael explained that there would be recessed lights under the front porch, along with the light glow of the chimney at the top along with a couple of sconces mounted to the chimney wall.

Stacy Oar questioned about the number of spaces needed for parking if the building is going to be used for public assembly, with building to accommodate one hundred. Michael along with Code Enforcement Officer Bill Kramer explained that 25 spaces would be required for this building and they now have 28. Bill said that based upon the occupancy and what the code calls for; they would have enough square footage.

Dan Castle asked if there would be sprinklers to which the reply was yes, most definitely

Carol wondered since this is a historic site, is there a parking code? Michael clarified that the Power House unlike the Cooperative Extension or the Chapel is not in the Mid-Main District, but rather in a C-District, where certain parking regulations do apply. Christine gave a little history on the original Roycroft Campus explaining that over the years, since Elbert Hubbard once owned the whole campus, individuals have since purchased areas/shops within the campus and

so property lines had to be split and not a one of them is straight, and so now have to be careful, and considerations have to be looked at, so as not to infringe on any ones space when trying to come up with a master plan for the campus. That is the reason why we must go to the Zoning Board of Appeals and apply for the necessary variances. Christine also went on to explain that the neighbor next door at 45 South Grove Street recently submitted a letter, requesting a 6' solid fence be placed along the property line on the south side, to shield the headlights of vehicles when parking in lot. Christine said that if that is really what the neighbor wants they would not object to installing the fence. Dan Castle questioned if the fence would only be for the parking lot area or the whole property line. Christine said only the section where the parking lot would be. Bill Kramer replied that fencing for the parking lot area is all that is required by code.

Bill Kramer questioned the applicants about the drainage in the parking lot, do you know where that water goes, and also you talked about a drainage system for the campus, how long before that will be looked at. Michael said that not to far away, since that is the reason in why the Copper Shop has deteriorated so much. The water has been seeping in around the foundation for years and has created much damage. A storm system for the entire campus would logically go over to Walnut Street and connect with the sanitary sewer there. Until then, they are currently looking at going out South Grove Street and connecting there. Bill asked what the floor elevation of the Power House would be. Michael said the finished floor in the Power House is 9" above the surrounding grade.

Carol wondered if samples of the construction materials would be brought in for view. Michael said that it would be possible, and went on to explain that all materials used where going to be as close as possible to the originals. He told of the 800 tiles that were salvaged from the roof when dismantled and how out of that 800, 400 were salvageable and would be used in the actual roof construction. Windows will be identical to the original windows, single glazed with storms, along with one of the original doors that was salvaged during the dismantling. The door will be cleaned up, reproduced and used in the interior of the building. The window & door casings will also be replicated out of red oak just like original.

Dan wondered where dumpsters would be located. Christine said that the Cooperative Extension, Copper Shop & Furniture Shop have disposal units behind the Cooperative Extension and that is where probably the Power House will also have theirs located.

Bill Kramer inquired about the width of the overhang. Michael mentioned 2 ½' wide.

Bill also questioned connecting into the storm sewer on South Grove Street. Michael replied that because of the drainage flow coming off the southwest corner it would be more logical to tie into the storm sewers on Walnut St. otherwise we would be fighting against the natural flow of the land by coming back to South Grove Street. Laura questioned how they were going to tie into Walnut St. "do you own property there" she asked? No Michael replied, they needed to make a deal with someone and hopefully tie in. And because of that, we may have to tie into South Grove St. for now.

Bud asked Michael because of the insulation used and the tapered roof, will there be less ice build up that will fall off. Michael said because of air vents installed in the ridge and eaves, there should be less ice buildup if any.

Bill inquired about the insulation used. Michael said that a blue foam board, with a rating of R6 per inch, which is a higher rating than bat insulation, would be used.

Dana A. Dylewski, owner of the property, at 37 South Grove Street, behind the proposed Power House, questioned the actual amount of property to the rear of the proposed Power House. He said that none of the surveys he has seen shows the exact amount of space between the buildings, and he feels that the Power House will be encroaching upon his property. Michael said that all indications are that there is 16.9' from the Northwest corner of the building. Dana said that his survey shows there is only 4' between property lines. Michael said that if that is so, then clearly this development plan will not work.

Dan Castle said that this is clearly an issue that should be resolved legally and not something that the Planning Commission can get involved with or make a decision on.

Chairman Castle questioned Bill Kramer when the Zoning Board of Appeals would be looking at the variance request and whether the Village Board needed anything from the Planning Commission for the next meeting. Bill replied that the ZBA was meeting on July 17, and as far as the Village Board, they would be waiting for the results of the variance request and would not set a Public Hearing until after hearing back from the Planning Commission.

Alternate Bud Babcock told the applicants for the Power House that he had a very positive feeling about this project. For East Aurora to have a significant Historic Site is very important to the area, however, there are several issues that need to be resolved. Property line status is one concern that must be addressed, for both properties on the south and west sides. It might be necessary to move the building a foot or two to become in compliance with the code. Also the newly installed water line from last year, might have to be moved, so as you would be able to hook into the storm sewer on South Grove Street. Many of these issues might be solved by simply moving the site of the Power House one foot here or there.

There being no further questions, Don Wynes made a motion to table the meeting until 8/6/08, seconded by Laura Mehl and passed unanimously.

Donald Wynes made a motion to close the meeting at 8:10 PM, seconded by Laura Mehl and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted

Susanne M. Wolff  
Deputy Clerk