

**CITY OF DOVER PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 21, 2025**

The Meeting of the City of Dover Planning Commission was held on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 7:00 PM as an In-Person Meeting and also using the phone/videoconferencing system Webex. The Meeting Session was conducted with Chair Mr. Witham presiding. Members present were Mr. Michael Lewis, Mr. Roach (*arrived at 7:18pm*), Mrs. Denney, Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Baldwin, Dr. Jones, Mr. Reaves (virtual), and Mr. Witham. Mrs. Welsh was absent.

Staff members present were Mrs. Dawn Melson-Williams, Ms. Sharon Duca, Mrs. Kristen Mullaney, and Mr. Jason Lyon.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mrs. Maucher moved to approve the Agenda as submitted, seconded by Dr. Jones and the motion was carried 7-0 with Mr. Roach and Mrs. Welsh absent.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF DECEMBER 16, 2024

Mrs. Denney moved to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of December 16, 2024, seconded by Mr. Baldwin and the motion was carried 7-0 with Mr. Roach and Mrs. Welsh absent.

COMMUNICATIONS & REPORTS

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the next Planning Commission regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025. That is a Tuesday evening because Monday is a holiday.

Mrs. Melson-Williams provided an update on the regular City Council and various Committee meetings held on January 13 & 14, 2025.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that they included in the packet a copy of the finalized Schedule for 2025. It has all of your meeting dates. There were a couple of minor changes to some Council Meeting dates; as they had offered the Draft last month. This is what we are working with at this point for filing deadlines and future meetings of our Development Advisory Committee and Commission.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that the Dover Kent County MPO held a Workshop back on January 13, 2025 regarding a Safety Action Plan that they are working with a consultant to develop. They included that information in your packet. There are also some information flyers at the entrance to the meeting room. While the Workshop is completed, there is a survey and additional information about the project on the MPO's website. Be sure to check that out related to any kind of input that you wish to have about safety and transportation here in Kent County.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there are two training and workshop opportunities that they included for the Planning Commission members. If you are interested in attending these workshops, please let Staff know because we have to register you. There was one last week: "Planning 101: Planning Your Community's Future". These are a workshop series presented by the Institute for Public Administration at the University of Delaware. The next one is an

“Introduction to Land Use Law: The Constitution and Takings Workshop”. That will be held here in Kent County at the Kent County Levy Court Administration Building on February 7, 2025. It is an in-person meeting. If you are interested in attending, please let Planning Staff know.

OPENING REMARKS CONCERNING DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Mrs. Melson-Williams presented the audience information on policies and procedures for the In-Person Meeting and Virtual Meeting using the Webex system.

OLD BUSINESS

Requests for Extensions of Planning Commission Approval: None

NEW APPLICATIONS

S-25-01 Dover Mobility Center Garage at 133 S. Governors Avenue – Public Hearing and Review of a Site Development Plan Application, Parcel Consolidation Plan, and associated Architectural Review Certification for construction of a four/five story, multi-purpose parking garage structure to be known as the Dover Mobility Center Garage. The structure is to consist of 431 parking spaces, welcome space, a management office, and retail and storage spaces. The subject site involves a series of parcels in the block between S. Governors Avenue and S. Bradford Street north of Minor Street Alley. The properties are zoned C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and subject to the H (Historic District Zone). The owners of record are the Downtown Dover Partnership, City of Dover, Capital City Transformation Alliance, and CEI Properties LLC. Property Addresses: 133 S. Governors Avenue, 139 S. Governors Avenue, 145 S. Governors Avenue, 136 S. Bradford Street, 148 S. Bradford Street, 150 S. Bradford Street, and 132 S. Bradford Street, Dover. Tax Parcels: ED-05-077.09-02-10.00-000, ED-05-077.09-02-09.00-000, ED-05-077.09-02-08.00-000, ED-05-077.09-02-24.00-000, ED-05-077.09-02-25.00-00, ED-05-077.09-02-27.00-000, and ED-05-077.09-02-23.00-000. Council District 4. *For Consideration: Tree Mitigation Plan and Parking Strategy Statement. This project was the subject of HI-24-09 for Historic District Commission Review and Recommendation on the Architectural Review Certification on December 19, 2024. The project is also associated with MI-24-10 Request for Alley Abandonment: Part of Alley Between S. Governors Avenue and S. Bradford Street.*

Representatives: Mr. Mike Riemann, Becker Morgan Group; Mr. Ken Anderson, Downtown Dover Partnership; Ms. Diane Laird, Downtown Dover Partnership; Mr. Mike Caine, Core States; Mr. Caman Skinner, Core States; Mr. Mike Henry, Becker Morgan Group; Mr. Jed Hatfield, Colonial Parking; Mr. JD Bartlett, EDiS

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that this Site Plan S-25-01. It is for the Dover Mobility Center Garage. The main address that we are using is 133 South Governors Avenue. The Planning Commission this evening is considering a Site Development Plan. Along with that, there is consideration of the Architectural Review Certification which we have information coming to us from the Historic District Commission. As part of this Site Plan Review, there are other items for consideration. That would include a Tree Mitigation Plan and then their Parking Strategy

Statement. Technically, they have four things that are interlinked here: the Site Development Plan, the Architectural Review Certification, the Tree Mitigation Plan, and the Parking Strategy Statement.

This project involves a total of six main parcels and then an adjoining parcel. They are found north of the Minor Street Alley. The image on the screen shows the Minor Street Alley at the bottom of the drawing. We are between S. Bradford Street on the right and S. Governors Avenue on the left. It is a series of parcels in a number of different ownership entities at the present time but ultimately will end up under one parcel ownership entity. The addresses involved are 133 S. Governors Avenue, 139 S. Governors Avenue, 145 S. Governors Avenue, 136 S. Bradford Street, 148 S. Bradford Street, and 150 S. Bradford Street. Additionally, there is an adjacent parcel at 132 S. Bradford Street that may be involved in the project to address some stormwater management and tree planting requirements. In total, we are dealing with just over an acre of land here in Downtown Dover. It is proposed for a parking garage structure that also has some other amenities on its first floor. The zoning of this area is C-2 (Central Commercial Zone) and it is found within the H (Historic District Zone). The proposal is for a parking structure, roughly four to five stories in height depending on how you count the last ramping of the project building that would provide an estimated 431 vehicle parking spaces. Currently right now, this area has a series of surface parking lots and also two buildings that were at 148 and 150 S. Bradford Street that were previously reviewed in May and June of 2024 for demolition. Demolition on one of those commenced today. That was previously approved for demolition and authorized under Permit. The other project that this is associated with that she mentioned earlier in the meeting is the Request for Abandonment of an Alley. The Planning Commission saw that last month with MI-24-10 and that would abandon the portion of the alley that kind of bi-sects the six parcels that make of the bulk of the project site. That alley, in some cases, runs across parcels and also exists in its own right-of-way area in other locations. But basically they are looking at a parking garage structure. The multiple stories of the structure will pretty much make up this entire project area. As you can see here, it expands from S. Bradford Street to S. Governors Avenue with entrances on both of those. The building is brought to the sidewalk. There is, as part of the Architectural Review Certification, a request for an Alternative Bulk Standard related to the side yard setback along the north property line. At that north property line, the setback varies from 0.7 feet to a little over 5 feet. In the C-2 (Central Commercial Zone), that setback would be required to be 5 feet when it's provided; however, the Historic District Commission has recommended approval, as did Staff, of that Alternative Bulk Standard to allow the placement configuration of the building as shown here. The Planning Commission, because this project is in the H (Historic District Zone), will be focusing on the final action of the Architectural Review Certification. That is required with any new construction in the H (Historic District Zone). The Historic District Commission met on December 19, 2024 to consider their recommendation on this Architectural Review Certification. They did recommend approval of that and referenced that in a Report that was included in the Planning Commission meeting packet. The Historic District Commission recommends approval subject to the conditions that Staff offered as part of that Report. If you are looking at that Report specifically, those Staff Comments and Recommendations were outlined starting on Page 8 of that document. They are just referencing that document in that Planning Commission Report. The Historic District Meeting Minutes were completed and they were emailed to the members of the Planning Commission on Friday afternoon of last week and also provided in hard copy on the Commissioner's desks this evening.

They outline the discussion of the Historic District Commission in consideration of the Plan to develop this site. Related to Planning Commission items, one thing she will note is parking in the C-2 (Central Commercial Zone). There is not a requirement for parking based on use. In this area, it does request that the applicant provide a Parking Strategy Statement. The applicant has done that and it describes what is the existing parking scenario there and then the strategy with this new building, which is a parking garage. Additionally, there are bicycle parking requirements that they are accommodating within the building. Also, within the building, there is a plan for some dumpster units. There is ongoing discussion regarding the centralized collection point at this current site for how that will be implemented in the future. On the image here, and the applicant will talk more about their architecture for this project, you can see this view shows that the first couple stories of the building are brick and then it transitions to a precast concrete panel system for the upper floors where you find the bulk of the parking structure itself. She will leave the details of the architecture to the applicant to discuss more fully. The other item for the Planning Commission is related to tree planting. The overall project would require fifteen (15) trees. They have made a request for a Tree Mitigation Plan that in concept would plant a number of those trees off-site, on either land owned by the Downtown Dover Partnership or in conjunction with the City of Dover in looking for locations for tree planting. The *Zoning Ordinance* allows the Planning Commission to grant that waiver from planting the trees onsite to planting them somewhere here in the City of Dover. The Planning Commission should be aware that the Development Advisory Committee Report is provided to them in total and includes the comments from the other regulatory agencies. Additionally, she already mentioned that they received a copy of the Architectural Review Certification Report from the Historic District Commission and also their Meeting Minutes. Just a reminder on what you are looking at tonight. You are looking at a Site Development Plan with Architectural Review Certification and then consideration of the Tree Mitigation Plan and Parking Strategy Statement. Those items can be collectively addressed under one motion or multiple motions in the future as Planning Commission members see fit.

Mr. Witham stated that he believes that the Historic District Commission has recommended approval. Is that correct? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that is correct, they have recommended approval of this Development Plan.

Mr. Witham stated that he thinks all of the Commissioners have Minutes from that meeting if they want to review that.

Mr. Riemann stated that the first slide of their presentation just gives an overview of the property which he knows everyone is familiar with because they had seen this application recently as it related to the Alley Abandonment that Mrs. Melson-Williams has mentioned. The property consists of six (6) parcels. You see those outlined in yellow with S. Bradford Street to the right side, S. Governors Avenue to the left, and Minor Street Alley to the south. The purple highlights the existing parcel boundaries that make up the six (6) parcels totaling roughly 0.85 acres. The Alley Abandonment that you saw recently sort of bisects running from the middle of Minor Street north on the property. The next slide is an overview of how the building itself sits on those six (6) parcels. As Mrs. Melson-Williams has mentioned, it primarily occupies a majority of the site. You see what is shown in the tannish orange is the building and then the green there is some open space and stormwater area. The next slide highlights in a little bit more detail the proposed

structure itself from a Site Plan perspective. The total square footage of the facility is approximately 170,000 SF. There are four parking levels plus the roof and this will total approximately 431 parking spaces including four (4) future EV capable parking spaces as well as thirty-six (36) bike parking spaces to the Bradford Street side of the building. You can also see the location of the retail portion of the project, the Welcome Center portion of the project, some storage, and management office space. The ground floor portion of the parking facility consists of some thirty (30) minute shorter term parking while the upper levels will consist of some longer term permit type parking. As was discussed on the Alley Abandonment and Mrs. Melson-Williams covered it very well, this body voted to approve the Alley Abandonment. They then had to go before the Utility Committee for recommendation which they recommended approval on January 14, 2025 and this will be complete when we go before City Council on February 10, 2025. That is in process and moving forward. As it relates to historic review as was mentioned, that was approved on December 19, 2024 and we are working to include the recommendations from the Historic District (Commission) review board in the final design. The next slide shows some of the architectural elevations. These should be in packet. The top elevation is from Governors Avenue and the bottom elevation is from Bradford Street. The next slide shows the additional sides. The bottom elevation is looking south from Governors Avenue. The black outline represents the Harry Louie Building and then the green is the façade which is intended to be in a painted mural to be selected through an RFP process and then the opposing side is coming from the south looking north. The next slide shows some perspectives. You can see the brick that was mentioned, the stepping back of the parking structure itself obviously creating some appeal to the street and pedestrian friendly sidewalks and landscaping along the street there. The next slide you can see the entrance and exit. The facility does have access points on both Bradford Street and Governors Avenue. Those would be both enter and exits. You can see the red arrows showing the access to Bradford Street and to S. Governors Avenue. There is some bike parking. He thinks the Code required around twenty (20) parking spots for bikes. This has thirty-six (36) total spots. They also have an opportunity for a bike share on the S. Governors Avenue side of the project. This project is really meant to be a mobility hub providing opportunity for lots of different transportation opportunities. Vehicular parking to obviously serve the Downtown which is something that is part of the Vision Plan that was done in the Master Plan but also providing other opportunities to bike, bike share, and also ride share as well. This would be a huge benefit to Downtown Dover and something that he knows as a business in Downtown Dover that they are looking forward to.

As it relates to the tree waiver, that is something that this body does need to act on. Thirteen (13) trees are required in accordance with the Code; however, as you can see, a majority of the site is occupied by the structure itself and there is really not the opportunity to plant those trees. They have committed and their request is to work with the City to mitigate those trees off-site on other properties either owned by the City or owned by the Downtown Dover Partnership. They have reviewed the Staff Report. They will continue to work with the agencies. As you know, this is really the first step in the plan process with the City as a preliminary plan approval and then they will continue after this step to work with the agencies such as DelDOT, the Fire Marshal's Office, Kent Conservation District, the Public Works Department and obviously the Planning Office. They still have some more work to do after today and they will continue to work with those agencies to achieve all of those approvals.

Mrs. Maucher stated that on the front of the package of photos, there is a car parked in front of the structure. Are you planning to eliminate on-street parking on both sides of S. Governors Avenue? Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Hatfield stated that the plan at this point is the parking on the S. Governors Avenue west side opposite from the Mobility Center would essentially be untouched. On the east side up against the curb of the Mobility Center, right now there is a bus stop there which would probably remain. We may impact some parking where the entrance and exit will be for the Mobility Center so there may be a couple of spaces lost on-street there.

Mrs. Denney stated that she is not sure how familiar you are with Dover or if you live in Dover but she does. She lives eleven (11) blocks north on State Street. The nature of our historic town here in the State that started the Capital City of the State that started the Nation, they do a lot of things down here to celebrate our history. Dover Days, St. Patrick's Day, Memorial Day Parades, and Fourth of July on The Green and hundreds of people come to be here. It is a very family oriented activity that happens every few months. Santa comes to town and people gather here. Even prior to our current economy, it can be difficult for families to do things and there has always been free parking and plenty of it. Of course some of the lot that you will be utilizing will take away some of that parking, although there should be some on-street parking but not quite as much now. Would there be any consideration towards when those specific historic events happen that perhaps there would be some type of a holiday from parking as well? Because she is telling you that families come. These are big days in our lives. May Day parades, re-enactments of historic events and she is not talking about when the Amish Bike Tour happens. There are some other events that happen but especially those that pertain to the City of Dover. Could there be some exception for those people so the same families can still come and enjoy the events? Especially around Christmas it is important because money is tight and this is how we celebrate. She is just wondering how that could work out. Responding to Mrs. Denney, Mr. Hatfield stated to give a little bit of his background. He does not live in Dover but he has been coming to Dover and served on the Parking Committee of the Downtown Dover Partnership for over fifteen (15) years. He is very familiar with Downtown Dover and familiar with parking Downtown and familiar with all of the activities that you described. He had the privilege of being Downtown for the Fire & Ice Festival and there a lot of people, exactly like she described for some of the other big events that happen in town. At the end of this project, once this project is built, the building will actually be owned by the Downtown Dover Partnership. So, Colonial Parking won't be making decisions about fees or when fees are charged. He is sure that the Downtown Dover Partnership would be supportive of events. Many of the events they help host so he is sure that they would probably be willing to offer parking which would now create more opportunity for more people to come Downtown and have a safe convenient place to park. He would suspect that those big event days would probably be complimentary parking.

Mrs. Denney stated that she would ask them when their representative comes up. She also has a lot of concern about it and she happened to Chair the meeting when this was first introduced. To her, when you are the Chair you feel a little muffled. She really has a need in her heart because she is very much into history and nature. She is very concerned that at some point there will be issues that occur with some of our brick buildings. It's really not just the historic buildings and it doesn't matter because this came up at that meeting, "well nobody lived there" or "nobody died there." Well, you know what, people did live there and at the time of some of these buildings,

there was no hospital and people were born, lived and died in those houses. She would be willing to guarantee in many of those houses at least. Her big concern is that within Dover, there was a Quaker named Jonathan Jenkins. She happened to eventually with her husband, purchase and live in that house in Camden. He had indentured servants. He was a Quaker and he had indentured servants. He hid them and protected them. They and the neighbors had almost underground railroads under their houses trying to protect those people and thereby protecting history. People thought they were slaves but they were indentured servants and when he freed one of his indentured servants, Absolam Gibbs, he gave him a lot of clay which is now on Camden-Wyoming Avenue. It was clay. The Quakers got together and decided to give them (him and other freed slaves or indentured servants) this lot and they used that clay to hand make bricks. They made the bricks for a lot of the original houses in Camden and some of the buildings in Dover. It is hard to research all of that, as she has been trying to do some on her own. But she thinks it would be a travesty if any of the buildings here in this historic area that were built by freed indentured servants were lost; she thinks that would be a travesty and she just needs to say that out loud.

Mr. Lewis stated that if he saw the numbers right, four (4) out of four hundred thirty-one (431) spaces are potentially for electric. Is that a normal ratio? One for every one hundred spaces when you are building a new lot or how does that work? Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Hatfield stated that the ratios are all over the place because EV utilization is still kind of all over the place and undetermined what the demand is going to be. It was a number that they are seeing in other parking facilities throughout the ones that they manage and kind of nationally. Some areas are putting in more because they are seeing more demand. But that is our intent, to have four to start and then adjust once we see utilization.

Mrs. Maucher stated that she thinks she read that some of the spaces will be allocated to apartments. She assumes that means the one right across the street. She knows that when she worked on Loockerman Street, our building had several permits issued to the business to utilize the parking at no cost to the employee. Will businesses be given a certain allotment and if so, how many of the 431 parking spaces will be unavailable due to commitments with residents or businesses? Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Hatfield stated that is a great question and it is a little hard to say today. The one project that they are working on across the street is contemplating about 150 apartment units. Depending on the mix of those residences, it could be 1 or 1.5 cars per unit. It could 100 to 150 spaces that they may be interested in utilizing in the Mobility Center; so it's maybe up to half. The intent would be that the building would be available and it's being sized to try and be available not only to that project but to other projects as well as overall Downtown Dover. We are anticipating that 400 spaces would be enough supply to be able to encourage the type of development that is contemplated in the *2030 Capital City Plan* and be able to have enough supply for all of the businesses Downtown, the residents Downtown, and the visitors to Downtown and really be an all-inclusive parking and mobility hub. That is why we are tying in bicycle parking and scooter parking and all different modes of transportation to be able to get in and out of Downtown Dover with this facility. We are contemplating that this would have enough for all of the future growth or at least a significant portion of the future growth contemplated in the Master Plan.

Mrs. Maucher asked if the intent is to not allow parking across the street. It would all be there?

So at least 150 of those 431 parking spaces would be used and then the grocery store would have employees. Would they be expected to park there? Her concern is that you are going to have an awful lot of these 431 spaces dedicated to residents or employees from businesses to park. That is why she was concerned about the elimination of on-street parking because that is an option as well. Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Hatfield stated that the elimination of on-street parking is going to be minimal and really just to satisfy the movement of activity within the Mobility Center. They are going to be displacing like 60-70 spaces on the parking lot to create 400. We are going to have a net gain of 300 or 330 spaces. The extra space will be to support the entire Downtown. Yes, some will be occupied by residents across the street but the beauty of having this as part of infrastructure for Downtown mobility is that the residents needs would typically be in the evenings and the business needs will be during the day and visitors may be a mix of different hours. By having this as a public parking facility, you get the benefit of maximizing the use of those spaces because you have different groups of people that are going to be parking and utilizing it.

Mrs. Maucher asked if there would be a bus stop at the front or would there be a bus pull out? Her concern is traffic going up and down. She owns a property on N. Governors Avenue. It is a heavily traveled road. With cars coming in and out of the Parking Garage plus across the street, it is a lot. Are buses going to be able to go in or are they going to pull on the side of the street? Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Hatfield stated that they would not go into the building. They would essentially work the way they work today. Most of the DART bus activity is on Governors Avenue today. There is a bus stop at Minor Street and Governors Avenue. Part of the design was creating the canopy to create a waiting area to tie into that transit as part of this total transportation hub. It would basically function on the street, just as it functions today. There is just going to be a building and some cover for people waiting.

Mr. Witham stated that in looking at the plans, there is going to be entrances for pedestrian traffic other than simply going through the entry to the garage. Is that correct? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that there are two stair towers for pedestrians that are glass on two of the corners. You can have pedestrian access and then go up to whatever level you need to go up to.

Mr. Witham asked if it was going to be a separate access for pedestrians to the building. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that was correct.

Mr. Witham asked where exactly the charging stations were going to be. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that he is not sure they have sited exactly where they are at this point.

Mr. Witham asked if they were going to be on the ground floor. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that typically he would say the ground floor is what they are thinking but they have not sited it on the plan yet.

Mr. Witham stated that he is thinking that people who want to charge their cars are going to be there more than 30 minutes and that will tie up parking in the building. Have you made plans for that? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that he thinks they are still sorting out

exactly where they go at this point but ground floors is where they think they are thinking they will go but they have not made a final decision on that yet.

Mr. Witham stated that he knows the City does not require a minimum. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that that was correct. Right now, the City of Dover does not have an EV parking requirement. They certainly encourage planning for it because a lot of times it's easier to plan for that infrastructure from the beginning.

Mr. Witham asked if there was any type of cars that may have an alternate fuel source to be banned from the building. As you are aware, technology for servicing cars either by gasoline or electricity is fast advancing. We now have fuel cell availability in automobiles that still require charging. This is an ongoing technology that is going to increase in the next couple of years. That will not affect your plans for the building will it? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that he does not think that is going to be an issue.

Mrs. Maucher stated that one of the impediments for the adoption of electric vehicles is residents living in apartments can't put a charger in their properties. Are you working with the developer of the site across the street that will have people parking in that garage to determine if they need additional EV spaces? Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Riemann stated that he thinks that is still in the planning stages and he is not sure that he has an answer to that right now. It is all the same team so obviously if they need to make some adjustments as they work through that plan process of that project, they can adjust.

Mrs. Maucher stated that it is just a consideration because it is a large impediment to adoption.

Mr. Witham stated that one of the concerns that the City would obviously have would be security. Is the site going to be a 24 hour site? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that when you say 24 hour, the garage will be accessible 24 hours. There will be some staffing in the area. There is an office portion but that office wouldn't be manned 24 hours. They haven't solidified what those office hours are at this point. They will have security cameras. Part of the design was with security in mind. You can see in the picture on the screen that the staircase that goes up is all glass so that there are visible areas and there are not areas where someone could be hiding or you can't see who is in the building. It will be professionally managed. There will be some staff on-site and there will be security cameras. The design itself was done in such a way with security in mind.

Mr. Witham stated that he assumes the glass area will be well lit. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that is correct.

Mr. Witham stated that he also noticed that on the design you have a ledge between the first and second floor and there is some green there. Is this going to be what they call a "green" building? Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann asked if he was talking about above the brick.

Mr. Witham stated yes, above the brick. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Riemann stated that he needed to defer to the architects on that.

Mr. Caine stated that as you are looking at this, they were trying to work through at least in the initial planning stages, how to deal with stormwater mitigation. It wouldn't be technically a green roof but they are interested in introducing what they call a tray system to help really limit the amount of stormwater within the site and also provide some greenery. It wouldn't be plantings; it would be what they call sedum. It is a specific kind of spongy moss but that is still really in the design detailing at the moment. They are really providing themselves the flexibility to help mitigate stormwater.

Mr. Witham stated that that type of technique already exists in Dover. If you look at the Kent County Courthouse, it's a green building according to the design. He knows that since he spent about 23 years in that building and that "green" had to be properly managed, manicured if you will. Meaning you are going to have to hire someone on a regular basis to take care of the greenery on the building. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Caine stated correct. When they talk about maintenance, it wouldn't be someone with a lawn mower or anything. It is very low maintenance. It would just be part of the routine maintenance of the building. It is not super intensive per say.

Mr. Witham opened a public hearing.

Ms. Diane Laird – Executive Director of the Downtown Dover Partnership

Ms. Laird stated that she just wants to acknowledge that this is a terrific team of designers, planners, engineers, etc. that have given a great deal of thought to the fact that they are in a Historic District. And they want to be very sympathetic to the history as well as accomplish the opportunities that exist for a very current building in a contemporary society. They are working very hard to make this a beautiful, aesthetically pleasing structure as well as efficient and exciting architectural opportunity for a community that is moving forward. They are excited about the future it brings because of the parking capacity and because of some retail. They are excited because it is one of the first re-development projects underway because it will lay the foundation for future re-development. It will not be having development that then doesn't have parking to accommodate or transportation options to accommodate many new residents that they anticipate here to make it a thriving Downtown. They are excited about it and they believe that they are moving ahead very efficiently as well as responsibly with the project.

Mr. Witham stated that given the size of the building between 4-5 stories high, it will probably be the tallest building in Dover. Would it not be? Responding to Mr. Witham, Ms. Laird stated that the hospital will be the tallest and also the Duncan Center and even the apartments that are at S. Governors Avenue and Loockerman Street. They are about five stories which is about the same height. They have considered that as well as the aesthetics from Loockerman Street and looking ahead or over. In doing some modeling and perspective drawing from various angles that are realistic view point or vantage points, it is not overwhelming. It is almost imperceptible for instance because of the color and also the trees, even in any given season. They are not concerned that it is going to be looking out of place or out of scale.

Mr. Lewis asked if the amount of spaces planned for, is that with the anticipation of there not being any parking on Loockerman Street in the future or is that not the plans for that? Responding to Mr. Lewis, Ms. Laird stated that it is not contemplated that they will every

remove every parking space from Loockerman Street. There may be some slight reduction, maybe 6-8 spaces with a plan that they have currently in a serious conceptual phase but that is to increase place making opportunities like more dining on the street, wider pedestrian walkways, so maybe some more curb bump-outs to reduce the speed at which people travel or want to travel in a pedestrian oriented area. Even with some of what they have contemplated for widening sidewalks or making it safer to cross streets will only eliminate maybe 6-8 spaces in the span of Loockerman Street. It is never the intent to get rid of on-street parking.

Mrs. Denney stated that to that point, when we have these parades that we tend to have, we do have a lot of fire engines that will come down Loockerman. With the width, will they still be able to travel down the street still? Responding to Mrs. Denney, Ms. Laird stated that these plans are concept and will move to the engineering phase with transportation experts so they are not concerned. It is important and a priority to ensure safe travel with emergency vehicles. Of course with two primary roadways to the hospital, they certainly want to keep that wide open.

Mrs. Denney stated that she is pretty sure the State and the hospital would be involved if something were to happen on Governors Avenue or State Street. Living on State Street is really easy during a snowstorm because Governors and State are the first to be cleared because of those reasons. Her concern is that when we have these parades, because often State Street is blocked off of and the officials from the parade have a viewing station where as they go by with their dancers or their wagons, they go by the viewing station and make announcements of winners. Many times, they end up going not even to Governors Avenue but further back, turning and then fire engines and the different wagons all come down, stop at the viewing station and then go around The Green area. It feels good to know that those widths will remain and those things can still happen.

Mr. Lewis stated that he doesn't know who would be willing to answer this but in the materials that they received, it cites a 2018 Study for the Kent/MPO which studied the parking garage issues in Dover through the years. This is the second study that took place. They found that 60% was typically the highest occupancy on a given day and that's with the current spaces available. It is fair to say that this group's feeling is that this Study is obsolete now because the 2030 Project wasn't contemplated? Are you anticipating a lot more volume in the future coming with all of the other projects associated with this? It is fair to say "if you build it, the cars will come?" Responding to Mr. Lewis, Mr. Riemann stated that he thinks Mr. Lewis hit the nail on the head. He doesn't think that the Study was considered during existing additions. This project is in reaction to the *2030 Plan*.

Mr. Witham stated that he takes notice of the number of nodding heads in answer to that question as well.

Mr. Hatfield stated that he would be happy to add to that. The Study, when it was done in 2018, the 60% was really isolated to one of the parking lots at the time. It was primarily in the Governors Avenue parking lot and it was really there while others were very well occupied at that time. In terms of raw numbers, yes that's what the percentage of open spaces was but it relates to some of the better located parking lots as perceived by the public, they were much more well occupied. In the *2030 Capital City Master Plan*, there was a projection done that if

they meet the goals of that plan, what would the parking demand look like? To Mr. Lewis' point, the conclusion of that Plan was that there would be need for about 800 parking spaces Downtown. They are looking at the Mobility Center as meeting about half of that demand at the time of the full buildout that is contemplated in the Master Plan.

Mrs. Maucher asked if there has been any feedback from the businesses and residents on Bradford Street about increased traffic volumes on their street and how it may affect them. Responding to Mrs. Maucher, Mr. Stonesifer stated that he is the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Downtown Dover Partnership. To answer that question, they have had several public workshops. One was with the residents of the immediate neighborhood on Bradford Street where they have expressed their concerns. They have been lock, stock and barrel with us. The designs and the concerns that they have had, they have addressed. They had a public workshop in early December 2024 just before they came in front of this body. They believe that they have worked through all of those concerns as well as the ingress and egress on both Governors Avenue and Bradford Street.

Mrs. Melson-Williams stated that there were two emails received by the Planning Office this afternoon from Mr. David Louie with questions regarding the demolition that had actually commenced on the building at 148 S. Bradford Street. Planning Staff provided him with some information that that demolition was in fact authorized by a previous application that was before the Historic District Commission and Planning Commission and that there was a Demolition Permit in place. We provided him with more information about this evening's meeting and that this evening was focused on the development of those parcels. His concern was the demolition that was happening and why they were having a meeting tonight if demolition was already occurring. His second email included a picture of the demolition work in progress. He did not specifically reference any comments to the Dover Mobility Center but she does want to note that for the record.

Mr. Witham stated that he noticed on the plans that the laundry business is going to abut right up to the building itself. Is that going to require some sort of party agreement with that particular business? It looks like it will be a joint or party wall to him. Responding to Mr. Witham, Mr. Canie stated that with this, they are abutting parcels. As part of the design, they are required to have a two hour barrier between that which they have included. That solid wall portion is Code required knowing that they are right up against the laundry business. They are not over into the Harry Louie parcel at all. They are just sort of recognizing that they are neighbors and are required to have such a barrier. There is five feet of separation between the two of us.

Mr. Witham stated that in response to what Mrs. Denney has asked about history, historically in the old days of Dover, party walls were a pretty common way of building buildings where you would have to share the adjoining wall with your neighbor. That construction doesn't really exist anymore from what he has been reading but that's a historical use of building materials.

Mrs. Denney stated that is her understanding as well. At a certain point, they stopped doing that for a lot of reasons and she is sure that fire safety was a main one but she bares no witness to the regulations and the why it stopped. It's just an assumption.

Mr. Witham closed the public hearing.

Mrs. Maucher moved to approve S-25-01 Dover Mobility Center Garage at 133 S. Governors Avenue inclusive of the Architectural Review Certification with alternative side yard setbacks, to approve the Tree Mitigation Plan and to accept the Parking Strategy Statement, seconded by Mr. Baldwin and the motion was carried 8-0 with Mrs. Welsh absent. Mrs. Maucher voting yes; based on comments from DAC and Staff and she hope it works. She hopes it brings in the businesses and residents that they are hoping for. Mr. Baldwin voting yes; based on Staff recommendations and he thinks it's a tremendous improvement for parking in the Downtown Dover area. Dr. Jones voting yes; she certainly thinks it's going to be a welcomed addition and she thinks the concerns raised by the DAC and concerns that have been expressed tonight are given consideration did that it will be certainly a welcomed addition to the Downtown area. Mr. Reaves voting yes; based on the reasons previously stated. Mr. Lewis voting yes; based on previously stated reasons and he just wants to thank the representatives for providing such great visuals with their presentations. It gives you a great sense of hopefully what's to come. Mrs. Denney voting yes; in keeping with the sentiments of the Planning Department. Mr. Roach voting yes; for reasons previously stated. He thinks it's an absolutely beautiful and welcomed addition to the Downtown development project and he really can't wait to see it come to fruition. Mr. Witham voting yes; he refers to the comments from the Historic District Commission. He echoes what was said there. The comment was that the location of this garage demonstrates a thoughtful design which enhances the traffic flow, supports businesses in Downtown Dover, and provides vital access to cultural institutions here in Dover. He thinks it's a welcome step for the future of Dover and its success and for the reasons set forth on the record tonight by the applicant as well as Staff comments.

NEW BUSINESS - None

Meeting adjourned at 8:29 PM.

Sincerely,

Kristen Mullaney
Secretary