



City of Venice

401 West Venice Avenue
Venice, FL 34285
www.venicegov.com

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

1:30 PM

Council Chambers

[23-56HE](#)

Epiphany Cathedral Height Exception (Quasi-Judicial)

Staff: Josh Law, Planner

Agent: Bruce Franklin, Land Resource Strategies, LLC

Applicant: Frank J. Dewane, Bishop

Petitions 23-56HE and 23-55SP were presented together.

Chair Snyder announced these were quasi-judicial hearings, read the memorandum regarding advertisement and written communications, and opened the public hearings.

City Attorney Fernandez questioned Commission members concerning ex-parte communications and conflicts of interest. Mr. McKeon, Mr. Willson, and Ms. Schierberg disclosed site visits. Mr. Hale disclosed site visits, his wife being a member of the parish and being approached by parish members. Mr. Hale affirmed that he could remain fair and unbiased.

Planner Law, being duly sworn, presented general information, project background, aerial map, surrounding properties uses, site photos, future land use, zoning map, proposed site plan, Floor Area Ratio (FAR) calculations, proposed renderings, elevations, bell tower elevations, Comprehensive Plan consistency, Land Development Code compliance, site plan application, partial demolition, Venetian Theme District, Historic and Architectural Preservation Board (HAPB) Certificate of Architectural Compliance (CAC) approval, findings of fact, height exception, concurrency and mobility, and recommended stipulation.

Bruce Franklin and Brian Baker, Applicants, being duly sworn, presented their project team, requirements of the Downtown Edge Zoning District, HAPB approval of CAC, traffic study, height exception, site and development plan, video rendering, and answered Commission questions regarding dry wells, number of exits and entrances, new driveway on Nassau Street, tree being moved or replaced, whether cathedral stained glass windows will remain, number of bells, and bell sounds.

Judy Collins, 461 Bayshore Drive, being duly sworn, spoke against the petitions, against bell tower due to cost involved, lack of need for remodel in church, and the reduction in parking.

Glennon Gagan, 101 Park Boulevard South Unit 214, being duly sworn, spoke on whether it was the final plan, and impact on the memorial garden.

Kurt Whittaker, 613 West Venice Avenue, being duly sworn, spoke on getting an acoustical analysis, position of tower, sound dispersement, and against the height exception.

Paula McCracken Knott, 1290 North Jackson Road, being duly sworn, spoke on the church hall, design being too grandiose, partial demolition, and the reduced parking.

Nancy Deforge, 332 Laurel Hallow Drive, being duly sworn, spoke on the historic preservation, the Nolan Plan, and sound concerns.

Mr. Franklin spoke on enhancing the memorial gardens, HAPB review and approval of design, existing bell sound system, and answered Commission question on frequency of bells.

Planning and Zoning Director and Planner Law answered Commission questions regarding the bell tower being freestanding, and whether church bells are exempt from noise ordinance.

Chair Snyder closed the public hearing.

Discussion took place regarding the bell tower being consider a new structure, the Commission does not review need of renovations, and the number of parking spaces being within code requirements.

A motion was made by Mr. Jasper, seconded by Mr. Hale, that based on review of the application materials, the staff report and testimony provided during the public hearing, the Planning Commission, sitting as the local planning agency, finds this petition consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, in compliance with the Land Development Code and with the affirmative Findings of Fact in the record, recommends to City Council approval of Height Exception Petition No. 23-56HE. The motion carried by the following electronic vote:

Yes: 5 - Mr. Hale, Mr. Willson, Mr. Jasper, Ms. Schierberg and Chair Snyder

No: 1 - Mr. McKeon

Excused: 1 - Mr. Preiksat