

Martin Tower developers request parking limitation exception at Planning this afternoon

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Martin Tower](#) March 11, 2021

 *Latest in a series of posts on Martin Tower* 

Martin Tower: Planning Commission, March 11, 5PM

Sorry for the late reminder about this meeting on the Martin Tower site this afternoon.

The developers are asking for 3 changes.

The City is ok with 2 but would “prefer” not approval of a request to allow more parking on the 8th Ave. side in front of the buildings.

The developer’s request:

“The applicant requests that there shall be no limit to the amount of parking between the front lot line and the building.”

The developer’s argument:

Section 1311.08(a) of the City of Bethlehem Zoning Ordinance states: “In the OMU District, parking spaces placed between a principal commercial building and the curb line of an arterial street along the front of the lot shall be limited to one (1) driving aisle and one (1) row of parking spaces.”

a Petitioner proposes to develop two large 3-story Medical Office Buildings and a Grocery Store along the 8th Avenue frontage, and a Profession Office Building along the Eaton Avenue frontage.

b The parking space placement limitation set forth in Z.O. 1311.08(a) will result in poor vehicular circulation around the Medical Office Buildings and poor accessibility to the drop-off entry canopy facing the arterial street. Furthermore, the parking space placement limitation causes the majority of the parking spaces to be at the rear of the building, such that patrons, the majority of which are elderly, are required to walk a great distance to enter the facilities.

c The parking space placement limitation set forth in Z.O. 1311.08(a) will result in the loss of parking spaces, including required handicap parking adjacent to the entry of the Grocery Store.

d The parking space placement limitation set forth in Z.O. 1311.08(a) will result in the loss of parking spaces at the Professional Office Building.

e The parking space placement limitation set forth in Z.O. 1311.08(a) is generally inconsistent with most of the properties in the vicinity of the Subject Property, many of which were developed or redeveloped in recent years.

The city's response:

- The current limitation of one drive aisle and one row of parking spaces between a principal building and an arterial street was included . . . to limit the amount of macadam in front of a development.
- In fact, [in other zoning districts] NO parking spaces are permitted between a principal building and an arterial street.
- The one row and one drive aisle exception was created to match existing layout to the west across 8th .
- Commercial buildings on 8th Ave, north of Eaton were constructed before the current zoning.
- The Planning Bureau prefers that the parking and macadam area in front of principal buildings remain limited. The bulk of parking should be to the rear or interior of the lot.