

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting and Public Hearing
Monday, November 22, 2010
7:45 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

PRESENT: Richard Connolly, Bob Mercado, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Mike Cassavoy, Carla Francazio, Tom Pawlina, Ed Cassidy, John Sadowski, and Jack Welch

Denise Gaffey, Planner, and Matt Hennigan, Assistant Planner, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by Mr. Connolly.

MINUTES

a) Draft Special Meeting and Public Hearing, October 14, 2010

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of October 14, 2010. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

b) Draft Regular Meeting and Public Hearing, October 25, 2010

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of October 25, 2010. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to move the Blueberry Hill application for Site Plan Review – Affordable Housing Special Permit up on the agenda ahead of the Board of Appeals cases. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW-AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

SP-09-001, Blueberry Hill Lane, Delta Fairfield Corporation (continued public hearing)

Patrick McAvoy was in attendance to represent the Applicant. Mr. McAvoy stated that the Applicant anticipates that the Engineer will be rejoining the Development Team and that a continuance would be appropriate to allow for the additional progress to take place before the Applicant returns before the Board to continue the review process. Mr. McAvoy requested a continuance of the public hearing to the Planning Board's December 20th meeting. Mr. McAvoy submitted an updated site plan and revised elevations for Lot 4 to the Planning Staff. Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to December 20, 2010. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Documents: Architectural Site Layout dated November 19, 2010
Revised Lot 4 Elevations

BOARD OF APPEALS

Case 10-019, 127A Vinton Street, Eckler

The Applicant, Mr. Eckler, was present to describe the application to the members. After a detailed evaluation of the Applicant's proposal by the members, Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals that noted that the expansion to the deck has already been constructed with the exception of the pouring of the footers. The Board encouraged the Applicant to increase the amount of green space on the property by removing some of the underutilized paved areas and to consider the implementation of precautionary measures to ensure that the deck is sufficiently protected from the movement of vehicles on the site. The Board noted that the Applicant's proposal will require vehicles to park in tandem, which is prohibited by the Zoning Ordinance. While the Board is typically reluctant to support tandem parking, the members acknowledged that this type of parking is not unusual for single family and two family dwellings in the City. In this instance the Board viewed tandem parking to be

acceptable within the context of a duplex and preferable to the extent that pavement can be replaced by pervious material in the rear of the property. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Documents: ZBA application Case 10-019

Case 10-020, 173 Grove Street, Davidkovich

The Applicant's Representative, Mr. Cinella, was present with the Applicant to describe the application to the members. The members evaluated the Applicant's proposal. Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals that stated that the Planning Board finds the Applicant's proposal to be similar in appearance with other residences in the surrounding area. The members noted that the proposed project is consistent with the massing and density limitations prescribed by the Zoning Ordinance in terms of building height and its residential use. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Documents: ZBA application Case 10-020

Case 10-021, 122 First Street, Canario

The Applicant, Mr. Canario, was present to describe the application to the members. The members discussed the details involved with the case and Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals that noted that the Board observed the presence of the drainage easement that runs the length of the lot along the west side of the dwelling and noted that the proposed addition follows the line of the existing structure. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Documents: ZBA application Case 10-021

The meeting was moved to the Aldermanic Chamber to accommodate the members of the public in attendance for Site Plan Review Case SP-10-006, 354 & 360-362 Upham Street.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

SP-10-006, 354 & 360-362 Upham Street, Mark Carroll (public hearing)

Bob Bell, the representative for the Applicant, was in attendance with the Applicant, Mark Carroll, and the Applicant's Architect, Tim Johnson, and the Applicant's Engineer, Randy Huber, to present the application to the Board.

Mr. Connolly explained to the members of the public present the purview of the Site Plan Review process and noted that the Applicant's proposal also requires relief from the Board of Appeals.

Mr. Bell reviewed the details of the application, which includes the following components:

- conversion of the existing building at 354 Upham Street from a storefront with one dwelling unit above to a two-unit dwelling;
- demolition of the garage attached to 354 Upham Street;
- construction of one (1) stand alone single family dwelling behind 354 Upham Street;
- construction of one (1) two-unit dwelling in the southeasterly portion of the site (front right corner);
- construction of an addition to and renovation of the existing three-unit multi-family dwelling at 360-362 Upham Street.

Mr. Bell noted that the site plan includes 22 parking spaces, which exceeds the parking requirement by six spaces. Mr. Bell stated the Applicant's proposal requires a variety of variances and special permits from the Board of Appeals and noted that the Applicant finds the Building Commissioner's

zoning assessment to be accurate. Mr. Bell described the history of the site and its previous uses. Mr. Bell noted the vacant storefront at 354 Upham Street has been subject to several unsuccessful Board of Appeals applications in the past including, in 2007, the proposal to replace the gift shop with an Italian grocery. Mr. Bell highlighted the Applicant's successful background in assembling properties and noted that the way to make this site work is to re-unify the lots. Mr. Bell discussed the zoning challenges associated with site. Mr. Bell stated that acquisition cost combined with construction costs do not work for a single family development. Mr. Bell stated that the Applicant sought feedback from the neighborhood early on in the development process and received only support for residential use. Mr. Bell noted the zoning exempt potential uses that would likely be more detrimental to the neighborhood. Mr. Bell explained that the Applicant has worked hard to come up with a market driven feasible use. Mr. Bell noted that the scale of the proposed development has been reduced considerably from the initial 18 unit concept that was viewed as too dense to the current 8 unit plan, which is the minimum amount of units that is feasible to still obtain financing.

Mr. Bell introduced the Architect, Mr. Johnson, to review with the members the architectural elements of the proposal. Mr. Johnson stated that the tallest structure included in the application is 32' and noted that the proposal is in accordance with the open space and maximum coverage zoning requirements. Mr. Johnson explained that the architectural styles of the structures are intended to blend with architectural styles found in the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Johnson stated that the structures have been designed to include architectural features such as dormers, overhangs, and covered entrances that are intended to breakdown the massing of the structures. Mr. Johnson indicated that the use of architectural grade roofing shingles is proposed to create a sense of shadow. Mr. Johnson stated that the Applicant is targeting "empty nesters" and highlighted the use low maintenance materials such as hardiplank siding.

Mr. Bell introduced Mr. Huber to discuss the engineering components of the application. Mr. Huber noted that the proposal includes bringing new water and sewer lines onto the site. In terms of drainage, Mr. Huber noted that the proposal includes the addition of 1,000 square feet of impervious surfaces. Mr. Huber explained that the application includes the installation of two leeching systems to mitigate the increase in run-off.

Mr. Carroll expressed that a lot of thought has gone into the application. Mr. Carroll highlighted the amount of green space included on the site plan and noted that he is very excited about the project.

Mr. Connolly opened the meeting to public comment.

Richard Wallace, 85 Highview Avenue

Mr. Wallace expressed support for the project and noted that it would be an asset to the neighborhood. Mr. Wallace voiced concern regarding the possibility of rental units.

Dan Fusco, 172 Waverly Avenue

Mr. Fusco encouraged all involved to "strike while the iron is hot."

Dana Wiklund, 432 Upham Street

Mr. Wiklund expressed support for the project and found Mr. Carroll's outreach to be thoughtful. Mr. Wiklund noted that the site is an eyesore and voiced that the tenants do not fit the neighborhood.

Denise Judware, 116 Highview Avenue

Ms. Judware expressed that she was opposed to the previous food proposal. Mr. Judware noted that she is excited about the current residential proposal and feels that it will enhance the neighborhood.

Kathy McNeil, 30 Ardsmoor Road

Ms. McNeil expressed that she felt that the eight unit proposal is workable. Ms. McNeil noted that twenty two parking spaces seemed overstated and inquired regarding the City's position regarding overflow parking. Ms. McNeil noted water issues on Ardsmoor Road.

Margaret Nuytkens, 38 Ardsmoor Road

Ms. Nuytkens inquired whether the units can be required to be owner occupied.

John Gonslaves, 25 East Street

Mr. Gonslaves expressed that the Applicant's proposal is a good use for the property (much better than what has been there in the past).

Ann Spataro, 373 Upham Street

Ms. Spataro expressed that she is pleased with the proposed project and noted that it will be a great asset to the neighborhood. Ms. Spataro voiced concern regarding water issues.

Maryann Hichar, 17 Ardsmoor Road

Ms. Hichar voiced concern regarding a groundwater issue that arose all of sudden in connection with other development taking place. Ms. Hichar pointed out that there is no guarantee that "empty nesters" will purchase the units and noted concerns regarding traffic and overflow parking.

David Pierce, 15 East Street

Mr. Pierce expressed that he is completely in favor of the project and feels it will be a benefit to the community.

Albert Verity, 17 East Street

Mr. Verity expressed that he is in favor of the project. Mr. Verity stated that he feels that the proposal includes ample parking. Mr. Verity noted that he does not believe that the project will add traffic to Upham Street.

Christian Wright, 49 Ardsmoor Road

Mr. Wright stated that he is not concerned about the traffic generated by the Applicant's proposal and is not concerned with potential overflow parking on neighborhood streets. Mr. Wright expressed that the zoning exempt uses are not desirable for the area.

Jeannie Smith, 115 Highview Avenue

Ms. Smith expressed her support for the project.

Ms. Gaffey summarized the OPCD Staff Report, which provides an overview of past development proposals and summarizes zoning and planning issues and Department Head comments. The Staff Report is supportive of the scaled back residential development and recommends reducing the number of parking spaces to provide more open space and landscape buffer along the property lines. Mr. Cassavoy and Mr. Sadowski noted the flooding issues in the area. Mr. Cassavoy inquired whether test pits have been conducted. Mr. Carroll responded in the affirmative and noted that they went 10' down and did not find water. Mr. Pawlina pointed out that the Applicant's stormwater management plan is only designed to accommodate the increase in runoff generated as a result of the proposed project. Mr. Pawlina noted that the Site Plan Review criteria calls for the use of best management practices (BMPs) that are sized to capture, retain, and percolate to ground all runoff from impermeable surfaces generated by the five-year 24 hour storm event. Mr. Pawlina stated that a lot more can be done to increase the stormwater capacity

on site. Mr. Pawlina noted that the stormwater documentation included in the application should be stamped by a registered engineer. Mr. Pawlina requested that the Applicant provide a soil analysis.

Mr. Cassidy stated that a waiver for existing and proposed topography might not be a good idea based on the drainage issues in the area. Mr. Cassidy noted the volume of paving shown appears to be considerable and the amount of parking proposed may be over the top. Mr. Cassidy encouraged the use of semi-pervious pavement. Mr. Cassidy questioned whether the proposed leeching systems would be sufficient. Ms. DeSouza-Ward inquired regarding the proposed bedroom composition of the units and was informed by the Architect that five out of the eight units would include three bedrooms. The remaining three units are proposed to have two bedrooms. Mr. Carroll stated that a market analysis has been conducted and noted that the third bedroom is often used as an office. Mr. Carroll expressed that there is a real demand for these types of units in Melrose and assured the members of the public that a rental project would not be financially feasible. Mr. Pawlina suggested downsizing to two bedroom units would allow for a reduction in the massing of the units. Ms. Francazio inquired regarding which parking spaces would be potentially removed. Ms. Francazio suggested pulling back the parking spaces along Upham Street to create additional green space, which would provide screening and reduce the "parking court" effect.

Mr. Sadowski inquired regarding the potential timeline for the project. Mr. Carroll stated that he hopes to begin construction in the spring. Mr. Cassidy noted that he viewed parking and drainage as the major issues. He stated that could envision additional discussion regarding lighting, the site lines on Upham Street, and the possibility of a subtle sign for the development. Mr. Cassidy pointed out that the lack of covered parking may have an impact on the market that the Applicant is targeting. Mr. Cassavoy expressed an interest seeing a topographical plan that shows the proposed grades as well as more information concerning the Applicant's lighting plan. Mr. Bell requested a continuance of the public hearing to the Planning Board's December 20th meeting.

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to December 20, 2010. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Document: Site Plan Review Application SP 10-006

OTHER

Release of Covenant for Boardman Subdivision

Ms. Gaffey informed the members that the Planning Office recently received a request to release the covenant for the Boardman Subdivision, which would allow for financing to take place for the construction of the single family dwellings. Ms. Gaffey noted that the City is still holding the remaining portion of the developer's bond for \$120,000. Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to release the covenant. Mr. Pawlina SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Document: Correspondence dated November 22, 2010 from the Applicant's Representative for the Boardman Subdivision to the City Planner

Schedule Zoning Subcommittee Meeting

Ms. DeSouza-Ward proposed a meeting of the Zoning Subcommittee in January on a date to be determined to continue their evaluation of the City's signage zoning.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM.