

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Annual Meeting and Public Hearing
Monday, March 28, 2011
7:45 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

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

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

Draft Regular Meeting and Public Hearing, February 28, 2011

Mr. Cassavoy MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of February 28, 2011. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Mercado who abstained due to absence. None opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW

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

Patrick McAvoy, the Applicant's Representative, and Chris Ryan, the Engineer, were in attendance with the Applicant to present to the members. Mr. McAvoy provided a brief summary of the applications and informed the Board that the number of townhouse units proposed has been reduced by one for a total of nineteen (19) units. Mr. Ryan presented a revised general grading scheme in response to the Architect's new layout for the development. Mr. Ryan stated the revised grading plan will capture more runoff in the drainage system. Mr. Ryan explained that the elevation of the southernmost unit on Lot 3 combined with its close proximity and lack of buffer in relation to the adjacent single family dwelling on Forest Street resulted in the elimination of the unit from the proposal. Mr. Ryan noted that the topography in the area behind unit #11 is still challenging, which necessitated the proposed installation of a guard rail. Mr. Ryan noted that the revised grading plan features additional screening and the inclusion of a small parking area in the northwest portion of the site. Mr. Ryan stated that the new development layout increases the impervious area on the site by 2,000 square feet, which will be adequately handled by the proposed drainage system. Mr. Ryan stated from an engineering perspective the road cut works and the drainage system is appropriately sized. Mr. Connolly opened the meeting to public comment.

Greg Lawless, 23 Hunt Terrace

Mr. Lawless asked for clarification regarding the proposed parking included in the Applicant's proposal and expressed his concern regarding the potential parking impact on Hunt Terrace.

Alderman Bird, 97 Lebanon Street

Alderman Bird asked for additional information regarding the height of the proposed structures and expressed concern regarding the potential for the buildings to be looming over Forest Street.

Mr. Connolly asked the members for their comments. Mr. Cassavoy suggested that the landscape plan include a combination of coniferous and deciduous trees. Mr. Cassavoy noted that he has an issue with Unit #11 and the safety issues associated with the presence of the an 11' retaining wall in the rear and asked the Engineer how much the retaining wall could be reduced if Unit #11 was eliminated. Mr. Ryan indicated that the elimination of Unit #11 would bring the height of the wall down to approximately 3'. Mr. Cassidy agreed that the landscape plan should include a mix of species in varying heights when

screening is the primary objective. Mr. Cassidy concurred with Mr. Cassavoy's comments regarding Unit #11 and suggested that this location could be utilized for additional parking. In response to the parking comment from the member of public, Mr. Cassidy clarified with the Engineer that the roadway will be 24' wide, which would allow for on-street parking (excluding overnight parking). Mr. King asked for additional information regarding the proposed retaining walls. Mr. Ryan stated that he is not the structural engineer and noted that the retaining walls have not been designed yet. Mr. Ryan stated that he could potentially envision a pre-fab block wall or the placement of large boulders. Mr. Sadowski stated that the site includes unfortunate grade differentials and inquired regarding the severity of the slope behind Units #1-#10 and what safety measures would be taken on top of the slope. Mr. Ryan stated the slope is 1:1 in this area and indicated that a chain link fence would be appropriate along the top of the slope. Mr. Ryan stated that a 1:1 slope could be addressed with rip rap or a geosynthetic alternative that would allow grass roots to hold in place. Mr. Mercado confirmed that all of the engineering details included in the earlier submission would have to be revised. Mr. Mercado expressed an interest in the provision of a cross section of the retaining wall and the slope. Mr. McAvoy stated that the plowing of the small parking area in the northwest portion of the site would be the responsibility of the condominium association. Ms. DeSouza-Ward confirmed that a total of three single family dwellings will be developed on Forest Street by the Applicant. Ms. DeSouza-Ward asked how the proposed retaining wall behind Units # 1-#10 differed from the original submission. Mr. Ryan stated that the original application included a tiered/terrace system, which occupied a larger portion of the back yard area behind the units. Ms. Francazio stated that a site visit is needed before more engineering is conducted. The members discussed the locations for the Applicant to install a pole(s) that shall represent the proposed height of the townhouse units to provide additional context for the members. The members requested that the Architect attend the next meeting. Mr. McAvoy requested a continuance of the public hearing to the Board's April meeting. Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to April 25, 2011. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

SP-10-007, 99 & 111 Essex Street, Paul Wise (continued public hearing)

Bob Bell, the representative for the Applicant, was in attendance with the Applicant, Paul Wise and his partners John Wise and Shawn Herlihy, the Applicant's Architect Peter Quinn, the Applicant's Engineer, John Barrows, and the Applicant's Traffic Engineer Dermot Kelly to present to the Board.

Mr. Bell informed the members that the Applicant has entered into a lease agreement with Deering Lumber to construct a parking area at 137 Essex Street. Mr. Bell also noted that an overheating condensing unit at the former church building has made the structure unsafe for occupancy until the fire safety equipment is repaired/replaced. Mr. Bell introduced Mr. Quinn to review the updates to the application. Mr. Quinn noted the inclusion of the trash enclosure structure on the site plan as well as the provision of the Applicant's trash management plan for review. Mr. Quinn highlighted the proposed lighting plan for 99 Essex Street, which includes a combination of bollard lighting, in addition to lighting mounted to the building. Mr. Quinn stated that a roof plan is included that features the utilization of high efficiency equipment that is designed to be a quiet system. Mr. Quinn noted that the chimney will be removed. Mr. Quinn stated that the updated submission includes a revised landscape plan as well as floor plans that show storage area in the basement in place of the previously designated "work space". Mr. Quinn noted that the most recent submission also includes a layout for the 137 Essex Street parking area which utilizes the existing curb cut. Mr. Quinn noted the number of parking spaces proposed for the 137 Essex Street parking area could be reduced and replaced with additional landscaping. Mr. Quinn introduced Mr. Barrows to provide the engineering update. Mr. Barrows stated that the stormwater recharge system has been enlarged to capture the 5 year storm. Mr. Barrows stated that the revised site plan reflects the sidewalks upgrades and includes handicap ramps and a crosswalk across Willow Street. Dermot Kelly briefly summarized the Applicant's Traffic Study. Mr. Kelly stated that the peak parking demand for the project was based on observations at two similar residential rental facilities at 90 Myrtle

Street and 232 Tremont Street. Mr. Kelly noted that the Applicant's proposal includes almost double the amount of supply based on the demand at these two similar facilities. Mr. Kelly stated that the Traffic Study confirms that the traffic generated by the commercial uses that have operated previously on the site greatly exceed the impacts projected by conversion to multifamily use. Mr. Kelly noted that the proposed multifamily use is also shown to have significantly less of a traffic impact in comparison to the use of the building as professional office.

Mr. Bell stated that the actions of the Building Commissioner and the Fire Department demonstrate that the site is in need of investment. Mr. Bell noted that the proposed use is as of right, however, dimensional relief is required. Mr. Bell stated that the Applicant is putting their faith in the community and intends to meet LEED standards for the building. Mr. Bell expressed that the Applicant is open for input regarding parking (maximum spaces or maximum landscaping). Mr. Bell noted that the Applicant will also need to make application for parking variances from the Board of Appeals and would appreciate the Planning Board's support.

Mr. Connolly opened the meeting for public comment.

Tom Buske, 83 Essex Street

Mr. Buske inquired regarding the subject matter of the Traffic Study.

Bruce Carmichael, 121 Essex Street

Mr. Carmichael noted that the three parcels have been integrated to form one site. Mr. Carmichael agreed that the Applicant's proposal would not likely generate as many trips in comparison to commercial use. Mr. Carmichael stated that landscaping and lighting is important component of the parking areas. Mr. Carmichael emphasized the importance of drainage in the parking areas and the need for a maintenance plan for the landscaping. Mr. Carmichael suggested granite curbing in the parking areas to protect the landscaping. Mr. Carmichael stated that the Construction Management Plan should include work hours as well as sensitive use of the parking areas. Mr. Carmichael noted that the terms of the lease for 137 Essex Street are relevant to the application.

David Daykin, 62 Willow Street

Mr. Daykin inquired how the building will air-conditioned.

Susan Derrico, 83 Essex Street

Ms. Derrico inquired whether the stained glass would remain. Ms. Derrico asked what changes are proposed for the north side of the building. Ms. Derrico inquired regarding the anticipated target market for the apartments.

Mr. Quinn stated that the stained glass will stay, if feasible. Mr. Quinn stated that the proposal includes the addition of nine (9) windows on the north side of the building.

Gail Hamm, 61 Willow Street

Ms. Hamm asked for information regarding the Construction Management Plan.

Alderman Bird, 97 Lebanon Street

Alderman Bird asked how the comparable sites included in the Traffic Study were selected.

Mr. Bell stated that he selected what he thought to be fair comparisons of small to mid-size facilities near transit.

In response to an inquiry from a member of the public, Mr. Herlihy confirmed the Applicant's target market is single professionals or young couples with no children that work in Boston. Mr. Bell indicated that the term of the lease for 137 Essex Street is five years with a five year option to renew and the right of first refusal to purchase. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that any potential Site Plan Review decision would be impacted if the parking at 137 Essex Street ceased to exist in the future. Mr. Connolly asked the members for their comments.

Mr. Cassavoy took issue with the traffic study as a portion of the data collection was conducted during school vacation week. Mr. Cassavoy agreed that the traffic will be better off and acknowledged that two spaces per unit are not necessary. Mr. Cassavoy stated several parking spaces at 137 Essex Street that appear difficult to access. Mr. Cassavoy noted that the proposed landscaping needs an irrigation system. Mr. Cassavoy inquired regarding the relationship between the light wells and the proposed drainage system during intense storm events. Mr. Barrows stated the backflow prevention measures are included at the light wells. Mr. Cassavoy requested more information regarding the proposed fencing. Ms. Francazio noted the importance of the minimization of sound from the rooftop condensing units. Ms. Francazio inquired regarding the screening of the rooftop units and was informed by Mr. Quinn that screening would consist of a metal fence. Ms. Francazio noted that it was unfortunate that the Applicant was proposing such a tall trash enclosure in such a prominent location. Ms. Francazio stated that the Applicant should take into consideration that the site lines on Essex Street are challenging as the road curves at 137 Essex Street. Mr. Cassidy inquired whether the trash enclosure needs to be 8' in height and suggested that the Architect view the trash enclosure as a potential landscape element rather than mimicking the building. Mr. Cassidy questioned whether the wheel chair lift as proposed is code compliant. Mr. Cassidy noted the mix of the use of divided light and one over one windows. Mr. Cassidy expressed that the architecture of the building is already speaking a historical language and added that the inclusion of one over one windows and the proposed dormers gives a mixed message. Mr. Cassidy suggested that the Applicant consider changing the shape of the dormers to a "double peak" so as to be better integrated within the surrounding area. Mr. Cassidy noted that one parking space per bedroom (for a total of 22 spaces) is appropriate and additional landscaping is needed at 137 Essex Street.

Mr. King agreed with Mr. Cassidy's parking comments. Mr. King confirmed that a sump is proposed to be installed for the light wells and noted the need for snow maintenance in the light well areas. Mr. King encouraged that the sidewalk improvements extend to the 137 Essex Street parking area. Mr. Mercado noted the parking spaces at the 137 Essex Street parking area that are likely to be difficult to access and better suited for snow storage. Mr. Mercado inquired regarding the fencing and landscaping proposed at the 137 Essex Street parking area as well as whether any lighting is planned. Mr. Quinn stated that there is a lot of street lighting in the area. Mr. Quinn stated that the parking area needs to be paved and indicated that no curbing is planned. Mr. Mercado requested more information concerning the construction management plan. Ms. Francazio agreed that more detail regarding the construction management plan is needed. Ms. Francazio encouraged the installation of pedestrian scale lighting at the 137 Essex Street parking area. Ms. Francazio agreed that 22 parking spaces would be sufficient for the development. Mr. Sadowski stated that the Applicant needs to consider another solution for trash storage. Mr. Sadowski noted several challenging spaces in the 137 Essex Street parking area layout. Mr. Sadowski asked for a description of the proposed building materials. Mr. Quinn indicated that clapboard siding, clad windows, and asphalt shingles are proposed. Mr. Connolly inquired regarding the status of the maintenance person on site. Mr. Wise indicated that a maintenance person will be living in one of the units and shall be responsible for managing the site, including preparations for trash and recycling pick-up twice a week. Mr. Connolly agreed that one parking space per bedroom is appropriate. Mr. Bell confirmed for Mr. Connolly that the church structure is not designated as a historical building. With respect to fire safety, Mr. Quinn stated that the building will include a sprinkler and fire alarm system.

The members inquired regarding the provisions for bicycle storage and were informed by Mr. Quinn that the intent is for bicycles to be stored in the basement storage area.

Ms. Gaffey reviewed additional information to be provided by the Applicant for the next meeting, which includes:

- 22 space parking layout & associated landscape/lighting plan;
- Construction Management Plan narrative;
- Response to the architectural comments from the Board;
- Additional information regarding screening for the roof top condensing units.

Mr. Bell requested a continuance of the public hearing to the Board's April meeting. Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to April 25, 2011. Mr. Cassavoy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Connolly noted that this was the annual meeting of the Board and as such members are charged with appointing officers. Ms. DeSouza-Ward nominated Ms. Francazio for Chair. Mr. Mercado nominated Ms. DeSouza-Ward for Clerk. Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to elect Ms. Francazio as Chair and Ms. DeSouza-Ward as Clerk. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Ms. Francazio asked Ms. DeSouza-Ward to remain as the chair for the Zoning Subcommittee and Mr. Cassidy to remain as the chair for the Design Review Subcommittee. Both Ms. DeSouza-Ward and Mr. Cassidy accepted. Mr. King joined the Zoning Subcommittee.

OTHER

Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted the recent addition of two new members to the Board and volunteered to assist with the coordination of a training session that she felt would be a valuable opportunity for all members to attend. The proposed training session was well received by the members. Ms. DeSouza-Ward offered to work with Ms. Gaffey to put together a curriculum for a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 PM