MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Regular Meeting and Public Hearing
Monday, July 28, 2014
7:45 PM
Mayor's Conference Room, Second Floor, City Hall, 562 Main Street

PRESENT: Carla Morelli, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Ed Cassidy, Paul King, Robert Mercado, and Jack Welch

ABSENT: Michael Cassavoy, Sharon Petrillo, and John Sadowski

Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner, and Erin Zwirko, Assistant Planning Director, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 PM by Ms. Morelli.

MINUTES

Regular Meetings, March 24, 2014

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of March 24, 2014. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Regular Meetings, April 28, 2014

Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of April 28, 2014. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

BOARD OF APPEALS

Case # 14-008, 50 Brunswick Park, Jason Merrill

Jason Merrill, the owner of 50 Brunswick Park, was present to discuss the application with the Planning Board. Mr. Merrill indicated that he is seeking a Variance in order to widen the existing curb cut at the property. Mr. Merrill and his wife have two cars. There is a single car garage at the property line and an existing gravel driveway to the left of the garage. The curb cut does not extend the width of the garage and the driveway, so his request is to extend the curb cut to be the width of the garage and driveway. Mr. Merrill also noted that there was some confusion with his application regarding the driveway. The plot plan shows the existing gravel drive which will be paved with asphalt as part of the project.

Ms. Morelli asked where the second car is typically parked. Mr. Merrill indicated that he will jump the curb to park on the existing gravel drive so as to not have to park on the street.

Mr. Mercado and Mr. King noted that there is a very wide curb cut across the street for a three-car garage also located on the lot line.

Mr. Mercado asked if Mr. Merrill's neighbors are supportive. They are.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward thought that since the widened curb cut would access an existing driveway, the Planning Board's standard letter to the Board of Appeals would be sufficient. Mr. Cassidy suggested that the standard letter should be modified to indicate that typically the Planning Board opposes very wide curb cuts in residential locations. In some cases, the front yard becomes a parking court which causes unattractive and unsafe conditions. However, in this case specifically, because the request to widen the existing curb cut will provide access to an existing driveway which currently has no access, the Planning Board should have no objection to the application.

Mr. Mercado asked if the bull nose will be reused when the curb cut is widened. It will be.

Mr. Cassidy then MADE a MOTION to send a letter to the Board of Appeals which indicates that the Planning Board typically opposes very wide curb cuts for residential properties because the required front yard tends to become a parking court leading to unsafe and unattractive conditions. However, in this case, because the request to widen the existing curb cut will provide access to an existing driveway which currently has no access, the Planning Board has no objection to the application. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Document: ZBA Application Case # 14-008

SITE PLAN REVIEW & AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT
Case 14-002, 146-150 Green Street, Mark Carroll (public hearing)
Ms. Morelli informed the Planning Board members about the staff report that was distributed to them at the beginning of the meeting. The new information was not included in their packets.

Mark Carroll, George Dakin, and Attorney Robert Bell were present to discuss the proposed project with the Planning Board. Attorney Bell introduced the proposed project, for which the Board had previously provided preliminary feedback at an earlier meeting in 2014. The Board also provided a recommendation on the Board of Appeals case related to the proposed project. The Applicant presented a color rendering of the proposed project.

Attorney Bell introduced George Dakin, the project architect. Mr. Dakin highlighted changes to the architectural plans since the Planning Board last reviewed. On Sheet A-100, landscaping details have been added including a 4-foot landscape strip along Haverhill Place and shade trees within the surface parking area. Mr. Dakin indicated that the roof top units which will be screened by a 4-foot PVC fence. Mr. Dakin also noted that Carroll Co. will repave the portion of Haverhill Place adjacent to the property.

Mr. Dakin pointed out the trash and recycling receptacles on the basement/garage level. Attorney Bell noted that there are 6 units, but only 5 containers. A certain number of the containers will be designated for solid waste or recycling. If the site manager finds that there is need for more trash removal, additional pickups with the private hauler will be scheduled per week.

Mr. Dakin explained that the first and second floors have not changed since the last review.

Mr. Dakin described the proposed elevations. The Applicant proposes to use Hardie Plank siding in neutral colors. The lower portion of the building will be a darker color and the siding will be installed with a 4-inch reveal. The upper portion of the building will be a lighter color and the siding will be installed with an 8-inch reveal. There is some articulation on the building in that the bottom portion of the building projects out 3-4 inches from the top portion along the color lines. Mr. Dakin noted that the windows in the tower projected in an earlier version of the building design. The Applicant now proposes to install the windows without a projection. Mr. Dakin also indicated that the entrance has been detailed on the elevation drawing. The entry will be an aluminum storefront entry system. It is primarily glass and will be shaded most of the day as it is set back into the building.

Mr. Dakin provided an overview of the rear elevation. An existing curb cut on Haverhill Place will be utilized. As shown on the front elevation, the dark color on the bottom of the building wraps around to the rear elevation and projects a few inches from the top of the building. Mr. Dakin explained that the color wrapping is to feel like brackets on the building. The overhead garage doors will have windows along the top. The only exterior fixtures will be over the pedestrian entrances. The fixtures will only cast light

downward. Mr. Dakin explained that when a resident opens the garage door, an interior light will automatically illuminate the garage and vehicle entrance. Mr. Carroll noted that the exterior light fixtures are dark sky certified.

Mr. Dakin explained that the right side elevation has no windows due to fire separation requirements. He pointed out that the architectural brackets continue around this elevation as well.

Mr. Carroll passed around the color rendering and color samples to the Planning Board members. All of the Hardie products come pre-finished. Mr. Carroll noted that all trim, windows, and PVC will be white. Ms. DeSouza-Ward asked if the fence and roof top unit screen will be white. Both will be.

Mr. Mercado asked about the rear retaining wall and stormwater management. Mr. Carroll explained that the stormwater management system will collect all runoff from the site. The building downspouts will be connected to a dry well under the surface parking. Attorney Bell noted that currently the site has no infiltration and the proposed project will capture 100 percent of the runoff. Mr. Carroll indicated that an existing sewer line will be reused and a second one will be abandoned. Mr. Carroll will also add a new 2-inch domestic water line. The building will have one master meter. The new water line is located approximately 10 feet from the sewer line and both enter the building through the garage area. The dedicated fire water line will enter the mechanical room on the basement floor. Mr. Mercado noted that the plan indicates that a 1-inch water line will be retained. Mr. Carroll explained that he would like a second meter for irrigation but understands that the City is moving away from second meters. If that's the case, the 1-inch water line will be cut and capped. Mr. Mercado commented on the size of the oil and grease separator. It may be able to fit in the garage.

Mr. Mercado asked about the retaining wall. Mr. Carroll explained that it will remain although it needs some minor repair. The landscaping planter will be constructed out of a façade block. Mr. Dakin also noted that the retaining wall will be brought in line with the building.

Mr. Cassidy asked if the stormwater devices are connected to the storm drain. They are not.

Mr. Mercado asked if the granite curb on Green Street will remain, and if a curb will be installed on Haverhill Place. Mr. Carroll noted that the existing granite curb will remain on Green Street and a new curb will be installed on Haverhill Place in conjunction with repaving. Mr. Mercado noted that the Staff Report mentions ADA-compliant ramps at the Haverhill Place cross walk. Mr. Carroll explained that a ramp is not needed because the sidewalk and roadway are flush. Mr. Mercado asked about curbing on the opposite side of Haverhill Place. Mr. Carroll indicated that there is an existing stone wall.

Mr. Mercado asked about handicap parking as there is a discrepancy between the site plan and the design drawings. Mr. Carroll noted that there is not handicap parking.

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to open the meeting to the public. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Ms. Morelli then opened up the meeting to those members of the public who wished to provide comments on the project. She asked that each speaker introduce themselves.

Gerard Cantin, 164-166 Green Street, explained that he owns the health food store located near the project site. Mr. Cantin believes the project will be an improvement. Mr. Cantin thought that the site is not appropriate for retail or office uses due to inadequate parking and he prefers the residential use. He thinks the project will be beneficial and is not too dense for the location.

Joe Pelrine, 70 Howard Street, explained he is in favor of the proposed project. He is curious about where trash is stored, and how access is gained to pick up the trash. Mr. Pelrine also inquired about snow removal as the site is small. Mr. Pelrine asked if the site has been viewed from Farwell Avenue which is located on a hill above the project site. He wondered if the roof top screening will be adequate to screen the roof top units. Mr. Pelrine indicated he is supportive of the project.

Alderman Monica Medeiros, 3 Bay State Road, believes that the project will be an improvement. Due to the limited available parking on the street, the change to residential is good. Alderman Medeiros also thought the design was nice. She asked for clarification about the projection of the bottom portion of the proposed building. She also mentioned that a number of constituents in apartments have complained about the single master meter and recommended using individual meters.

Seeing no other interested parties, Mr. Cassidy MADE a MOTION to close the public portion of the hearing. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Ms. Morelli asked the Applicant to respond to the public comments. Mr. Dakin explained that the projection of the bottom portion of the building is only 3 inches, so there should be no concerns regarding unauthorized access. Mr. Carroll explained that snow will be removed entirely from the property by using a bobcat vehicle. Mr. Dakin explained that trash and recycling is located inside on the basement level. The receptacles are wheeled bins, so there is no need for a dumpster truck. A small truck will be able to handle access from Haverhill Place. Mr. Carroll pointed out that the City's hauler brings much larger trucks down Haverhill Place to service the single-family homes at the dead end.

Ms. Morelli asked about the adequacy of roof top screening from Farwell Avenue. Mr. Carroll explained he is not opposed to a higher screening fence, but the roof top units are fairly small at no more than 3 feet in height. Ms. Morelli asked if there is a typical practice for screening. Mr. Dakin noted that the units will be organized in one area with a uniform appearance. Ms. DeSouza-Ward noted that the roof top units will likely be seen, and agreed that being organized and neat is the best. Mr. Cassidy thought that there is a point of diminishing returns. A larger screen may look ridiculous, so 4 feet is fine.

Mr. Mercado asked if the units are noisy. Mr. Welch thought that they would be relatively quiet. Mr. Carroll explained that they will be quiet units. Mr. Welch confirmed that the units will not be a split system, and therefore, the screening will even buffer some of the noise.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward confirmed that recycling will be handled the same way as the trash removal. Mr. Carroll explained that it will be the driver's preference on how to maneuver on Green Street, Haverhill Place, and the project site, but reiterated that the trucks are smaller than large haulers.

Mr. Mercado confirmed that the building would be sprinkled. It will be.

Mr. Cassidy expressed disappointment with the building elevations. He thought that clapboard was overused, and suggested that the Applicant should mix in panel and batten materials. Mr. Cassidy also noted that he is not excited about the sloped roof on the tower element. However, the symmetry of the windows is handled well. Mr. Morelli asked if Mr. Cassidy would prefer to see three sets of materials on the building or just two systems one of which is not clapboard. Mr. Dakin indicated that he considered using a panel and batten system on the building, but it was not a strong material for the building and was difficult to wrap around the building. Mr. Dakin was concerned that a third material may not work on the building. Ms. DeSouza-Ward suggested that batten could be used as an entrance treatment. Mr. Dakin explained the entrance treatment will be white PVC.

Mr. Cassidy suggested that the cap on the sloped roof should be strengthened. He suggested that there should be more emphasis above the second floor windows and a flatter roof and overhang may help. Mr. King suggested wrapping windows around the tower just below the roof. Mr. Dakin thought that it would be difficult to wrap the windows around the tower due to the slope and due to fire separation requirements it would not be possible on the right side elevation. It would have to move to a flat roof and Mr. Dakin believes that the sloped roof is more of statement. Mr. Cassidy suggested using faux windows on the one elevation. Mr. Carroll indicated that he is not opposed to a batten system, and is willing to go to the Design Subcommittee.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward asked about the entrance step material. It will be a composite tread, most likely a grey color. Mr. Dakin noted that there is an overhang over the steps to provide protection from the elements.

Ms. Morelli and Mr. Cassidy agreed that having the project go to the Design Subcommittee would be useful. Mr. Cassidy clarified design changes that he would be interested in reviewing through the Subcommittee. The Applicant should consider the slope of the tower roof and a contrasting detail or material on the top portion of the tower. He suggested that the top 3 to 4 feet could be windows or faux windows. Mr. Dakin clarified that the Design Subcommittee would only be considering the tower element. Mr. Cassidy confirmed that only the top of the tower and the tower cladding would be considered, nothing further than the tower.

Ms. Morelli stated that it appears the Applicant has addressed most of the items in the Staff Report with the exception of the City Engineer's review of the soil analysis, drainage calculations, and Operations and Maintenance Manual. Ms. Morelli noted that the Operations and Maintenance Manual refers to the wrong project. Ms. Morelli asked the Planning Board if they can consider an approval with conditions or whether the project should be continued to a second hearing. Ms. Morelli also noted that the Affordable Housing Inventive Program Special Permit still needs to be discussed.

Ms. Gaffey noted that the Planning Board needs to vote on the waiver request, which includes showing natural features on the site plan, showing the 100-year floodplain on the site plan, sign renderings and location plan, and a traffic impact statement. Ms. Gaffey stated that OPCD staff is supportive of the waivers.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to grant the waiver requests. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Ms. Gaffey explained that the Site Plan Approval would include all of the standard conditions, including that the project must be -built according to the approved plans, review by the Design Subcommittee for the tower element, and I&I contribution. Other conditions include review and approval of the soil analysis, drainage calculations, and Operations and Maintenance Manual by the City Engineer, repaving of Haverhill Place along the project frontage, tandem spaces go to tenants who live together, snow storage on premises or removal from site, and trash and recycling is kept inside.

Mr. Cassidy asked about the light bulb for the exterior light fixtures. Mr. Carroll explained that they will be LED fixtures. Mr. Cassidy suggested that the LED bulb should be as close to incandescent color or daylight color rather than the standard blue hue of LED bulbs.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to approve the site plan review subject to the conditions that were discussed. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

The Planning Board discussed the Affordable Housing Inventive Program Special Permit. Ms. Gaffey explained that the project is small, and the Applicant has indicated that it is difficult to contribute a unit, so the Applicant would prefer to make a payment-in-lieu. Ms. Gaffey also explained that it is difficult to create units with the contribution payments made in the past due to the relatively small amounts. Mr. Gaffey stated that the Applicant has not indicated what his contribution would be. Attorney Bell stated that the Applicant can provide a statement on what he is prepared to contribute and it would follow the calculation set forth in the Ordinance which is based on the market-rate sale price. Mr. Carroll indicated that if he decides to sell the units in the future, he would anticipate a list price of approximately $250,000. As more discussion is necessary, consideration of the Affordable Housing Inventive Program Special Permit was continued.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing for the Affordable Housing Inventive Program Special Permit until September 15, 2014. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Review Application Case # 14-002
Affordable Housing Incentive Program Special Permit Application Case # 14-002

SITE PLAN REVIEW

Case 14-001, 92 Franklin Street, SIG-O Properties, LLC (continued public hearing)

Ms. Morelli informed the Planning Board members about the staff report and revised plan sheets that were distributed at the beginning of the meeting. The new information was not included in their packets.

Brian McCaffrey and Attorney Russell Bodnar appeared at the continued public hearing for the project at 92 Franklin Street. Mr. McCaffrey noted that the revised plans provided at the beginning of the meeting include the following revisions. On Sheet C1.0, the trash enclosure was moved to the back corner of the lot, wheel stops were added for parking spaces 7 and 8, and directional arrives, a stop line, and stop sign/ do not enter sign were added to the exit drive. Mr. McCaffrey noted that there would be no new landscaping at the front of the building. He also explained that in response to the Planning Board's comments at the last hearing, the stockade fence would be reduced in height at the driveway entrance and exit to improve sight lines. It would be reduced from 6 feet to 4 feet.

Mr. McCaffrey noted that Sheet C2.0 shows proposed drainage. The stormwater management system consists of a trench drain and catch basin, which connect to a dry well. Downspouts connect to a second drywell. A summary of the drainage calculations is shown on the sheet. The drainage conditions on the adjacent properties and on Greenleaf Place will be improved.

Mr. McCaffrey stated that the trash enclosure and bins will be located in the southwest corner of the site. The enclosure is 8 feet by 8 feet, and will contain 64 gallon totes. The 64 gallon totes will have a hinged lid.

Mr. McCaffrey clarified the size of the parking spaces. Spaces 1 through 6 are parallel parking spaces and are sized at 9 feet by 22 feet. Spaces 7 and 8 are 9 feet by 18 feet.

Mr. McCaffrey indicated that snow storage is shown on Sheet C1.0, which is depicted by dashed ovals. If there is no enough storage onsite, the snow will be removed from the property. These details will be clear in the Condo Association materials.

The rock wall on the western property line will be rebuilt. Elsewhere a raised berm planter, preferred by the City Engineer, will be used. The raised planter will also prevent runoff from flowing to adjacent properties.

Mr. McCaffrey noted that all of the existing exterior lighting will be removed and replaced. The exterior lights will be hooded with motion sensors.

Mr. McCaffrey explained that the pavement depth will be 3 inches. The parking spaces will be paved with grass pave.

Mr. McCaffrey explained that the lattice work on the building will be white plastic vinyl. The foundation wall material is field stone or poured concrete depending on the location.

Ms. Morelli recognized John Savarino, an abutter to the project, who wanted to speak.

John Savarino, 2 Greenleaf Place, indicated that he is also at the hearing on behalf of his neighbor, Mr. Chrisholm at 8 Greenleaf Place. Mr. Savarino has concerns about drainage. He also indicated that trees will need to be removed to accommodate the installation of the fence. Mr. Savarino noted that between the project property and 8 Greenleaf Place erosion needs to be prevented as 8 Greenleaf Place is lower than the project property. Mr. Savarino also noted that Greenleaf Place will be paved imminently and this project should not be allowed to cut into the newly paved road.

Ms. Morelli noted that the City Engineer provided a memorandum regarding the proposed project. She suggested that the Applicant could respond to the items raised in the memorandum. The first item requires a street opening and trench permit prior to construction. Mr. McCaffrey noted that the permit will be applied for as it is standard procedure. The second item request clarification on the paving material. Mr. McCaffrey explained that the asphalt will be the driveway material, and grass pave will be used for the parking spaces. Mr. McCaffrey explained that grass pave appears like lawn and can be moved. Ms. DeSouza-Ward asked how the parking spaces will be striped. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that pavers will be used. Attorney Bodnar noted that the City Engineer also requested that grass pave be added to the Operations and Maintenance Manual. Attorney Bodnar explained that grass pave must be fertilized, reseeded and moved. These activities will be provided for in the Condo Association budget and rules. The third item requested by the City Engineer was clarification on the curbing. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that vertical granite curbing will be used.

The fourth item requested clarification on the use of a raised planter bed or pitched lawn. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that a raised planter bed will be used. Mr. Mercado asked how high the planter is. Mr. McCaffrey indicated 6 inches. He further explained that a retaining wall with a 6-inch reveal will be used to stabilize the slope. Mr. Cassidy suggested that a retaining wall will conflict with the trees. Mr. Mercado agreed, and suggested that the Planning Board needs further detailed existing conditions plans, particularly topography and tree locations on the subject property and adjacent properties. Mr. King suggested that the Planning Board needs to see a cross section of the slope with the trees and site grades. Mr. King suggested that a plan of the property line with the topography and tree locations identified should be submitted along with a couple of cross sections of the retaining wall proposed near the property line.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward also indicated that clarification on the treatment of the Greenleaf Place frontage is necessary. Mr. McCaffrey noted that the City Engineer prefers loam and seed which is what will be used.

Ms. Morelli asked how long the raised planter bed is. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that it will end at the reconstructed stone wall. Ms. Morelli asked if the abutter has agreed to the stone wall going around the tree. Mr. McCaffrey indicated that the abutter has not been contacted. Ms. Morelli suggested that the conversation should occur now.

Mr. King thought that parking space 4 appeared to be too small. Mr. McCaffrey explained that the trash enclosure was reduced in size and parking spaces 5 and 6 were shifted to allow access into space 4.

Ms. Gaffey suggested that the Applicant should submit a written response to the City Engineer. Ms. Morelli noted that the plans should be updated accordingly. Ms. Morelli also requested a plan for the southern property line, shared with 8 Greenleaf Place, which needs to be reconsidered based on the Planning Board's comments.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing for the Site Plan Review until August 25, 2014. Mr. Welch SECONDED the MOTION. All members voted in favor. None were opposed.

Documents: Site Plan Review Application Case # 14-001
Letter to Denise Gaffey, City Planner, from Andrew Street, City Engineer, dated July 28, 2014.

ZONING SUBCOMMITTE REPORT

Zoning Amendment creating the Rail Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) & related Zoning Amendments – Approved July 21, 2014

Ms. Gaffey explained that the zoning amendments were approved on July 21, 2014 by the Board of Aldermen.

Documents: Letter to the Board of Aldermen from Carla Morelli, Planning Board Chair, dated July 18, 2014
Proposed Rail Corridor Overlay District Regulations, dated May 14, 2014, revised July 18, 2014

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 PM.