

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Special Meeting & Public Hearing
Monday, April 13, 2009
7:45 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

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

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) Design Review Subcommittee Meeting, March 9, 2009

Mr. Cassidy offered minor revisions. Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes as revised. Ms. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

b) Regular Meeting & Public Hearing, March 23, 2009

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of March 23, 2009. Ms. Marcus SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

SITE PLAN REVIEW-AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPECIAL PERMIT

SP 08-007, Stone Place, Stone Place Limited Partnership (continued public hearing)

Members of the Development Team present included the Applicant's Representative, Bob Bell, Rob Del Savio from the Architect (Bargmann, Hendrie, Archetype, Inc), Nelson Hammer from the Landscape Architect (Hammer Design), Bob Clarke and Jennifer Hamwey from the Engineer (Allen & Major, Inc.), Scott Thornton from the Traffic Engineer (Vanasse and Associates), Victor Sheen, and the Applicant, Tani Halperin (Mercer Properties, Inc). Mr. Bell introduced Mr. Del Savio to provide a recap of the Design Review Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Del Savio reviewed the improvements to Building A and Building E that have been designed to enhance their relationship with the streetscape and their presence on Washington/Pleasant Streets. Mr. Del Savio informed the members of the locations of the rooftop mechanical equipment. The equipment will be placed so that it will not be visible from Washington Street. Building A has a sloped roof with a well where 28 units will "hide." The Applicant is still looking into the possibility of the use of geo-thermal energy for Building C. Mr. Del Savio shared the lighting plan with the members and highlighted the use of 12' decorative shepherd's hook lighting along the street and interior walkways and more conventional 18' lighting fixtures in the rear parking areas. Mr. Cassidy and Ms. Marcus complemented the lighting at Oak Grove Village and suggested the use of similar "Acorn" ornamental fixtures. Mr. Del Savio reviewed the locations of the electrical transformers and clarified that broom finish concrete would be used in front of Building A and for all internal walkways. Mr. Cassidy shared that he feels the cornices on the buildings are weak and suggested a texture or color change to offer a stronger expression. Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Cassavoy suggested mimicking the band along the lower windows in addition to adding to a higher parapet. Mr. Del Savio indicated that the cornices project 18" and the bays project 24".

Mr. Cassidy expressed that the decorative lighting should run continuously along Washington and Pleasant Streets including in front of the Marty's Furniture Building. Ms. Gaffey stated that one issue to be resolved is that the decorative lighting would have to be located on the Tozza property (owner of the Marty's Furniture Building). Ms. Gaffey indicated that Mr. Tozza is open to discussing this possibility. Mr. Del Savio indicated that the lighting is spaced 20' apart on Pleasant Street. Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Cassavoy estimated that approximately 15 lighting fixtures would be required in front of the Marty's

Furniture Building. Mr. Cassidy stated that the Board is interested in a consistent message in terms of lighting; meaning a compromise between the 18' parking lot lighting and the 12' streetscape lighting. Mr. Cassidy inquired whether any textured/stamped pavement would be used to signify the entrance into the development. Mr. Del Savio indicated that bituminous concrete will be used and that no textured pavement is planned. Mr. Cassidy suggested special treatment in these areas.

Mr. Del Savio turned the presentation over to Mr. Clarke to provide an Engineering update. Mr. Clarke indicated that the plans show some grade changes behind Buildings B, D, and F. Mr. Clarke shared that the Applicant may be removing the berm located at Building B. Mr. Clarke stated that the project meets the infiltration requirements to the highest extent possible for an urban site and there is no opportunity for additional recharge. Mr. Clarke added that the Applicant is exploring the opportunity for a recreation area at the northern end of the property in proximity to the surface swale. Ms. Hamwey stated that the groundwater is at 4' below the surface. The swale will have crushed stone at the base. Mr. Pawlina inquired whether infilling the swale with sand has been considered. Ms. Hamwey stated that test pit data shows good soil is already in this location. Mr. Pawlina expressed that he felt that the volume of the swale could be more aggressive; but he acknowledged that its location at the end of the drainage line just before the flow enters the catch basin and proceeds into the canal would not have a major impact on the capacity of the pipe. He stated that he defers to peer review consultants conclusions. Mr. Clarke indicated that the 3000 cubic foot recharge volume provided is the maximum extent practical for an urban site. Mr. Pawlina questioned if the volume of the swale (3000 cubic feet) would be reduced if the recreation area is installed. Mr. Pawlina suggested that a change in materials could offset the loss of volume sacrificed by the recreation area. Mr. Cassidy clarified that the recreation area was a suggestion, not a mandate, from the Design Review Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Mercado inquired regarding the possibility of the use of trench drains and was informed by the Engineering Team that this type of drain clogs too easily. In response to an inquiry concerning the southeastern drainage structure, the Engineering Team explained that it would not be possible to set the drainage structure on a bed of stone as it is a closed system with high groundwater in the area.

The presentation was turned over to Mr. Thornton for a traffic update. Mr. Thornton showed modifications to the sidewalk at Brazil Street including bumpouts at the corners to enhance pedestrian safety. He mentioned that the crosswalk will shift to the east to better align with the sidewalk as suggested by Bob Beshara. In addition, the plan will show a stop sign at Brazil Street. Mr. Thornton indicated that some refinements have been made to the AECOM option for the intersection at Washington and Pleasant. Mr. Thornton stated that the revised plan removes pavement and adds greenspace to Washington Street to make it more difficult for drivers to go the wrong way. The new crosswalks and sidewalks will be added as well as stop signs at the approaches to Stone Place. Mr. Thornton shared that an alternative to this option includes a concrete paver median strip up the center line of Pleasant Street that would slow vehicles and narrow the traffic lanes. Mr. Thornton cautioned that there would be an audio element to this alternative for nearby residents. Mr. Thornton stated the Applicant has provided a concept for the intersection at Fellsway East and Washington Street that includes a painted median and left turn lane which the City can pursue with DCR. Discussion took place regarding the potential cost of improvements to the intersection. Mr. Thornton indicated that DCR has not seen the proposed design.

The Board expressed support for the proposed improvements on Washington and Pleasant to include Option B and suggested giving the Traffic Commission a copy for their review. Ms. Gaffey confirmed that the treatment of the crosswalks will be thermoplastic. Mr. Cassavoy asked that the extent of the new roadway pavement be shown in the plan. Mr. Cassidy and Mr. Pawlina suggested that the small area of greenspace at the corner of Brazil and Washington may not be the best idea due to maintenance issues and the difficulty for anything to grow in that area.

The Landscape Architect, Mr. Hammer, updated the Board regarding the proposed landscape design. Mr. Hammer indicated that the focus of the landscape treatment is on “shade” trees and four season plantings. Mr. Hammer stated all the trees included in the design are deciduous and explained that trees are planted in groups based on type. Mr. Hammer added the larger trees would be 2”-2 ½” caliper (18’ tall and 9’ wide to start). Ms. Gaffey confirmed that the 2 ½’ planting strip in front of Building A would remain, but it is not wide enough for street trees. Mr. Pawlina questioned the height of the street trees in relation to the utility wires and whether they would be maintenance intensive. Mr. Hammer reviewed the two types of fencing that are proposed: wood board fence (“Universal Fence”) for the parking area to screen the railroad tracks and the wood picket fence (“Chestnut Hill Fence”) for the pool enclosure. Mr. Hammer discussed the potential of a 24”-30” wrought iron fence for the terraces at Building A. Mr. Cassavoy inquired regarding the screening for Town Estates. Mr. Hammer explained that a 4’ tall fence would successfully block headlights, but leave a narrow space which would be prohibitive for plantings to grow. It was determined to be preferable to install a 4’ high fence and plant less arborvitae. The Board was informed that the wood board fencing would be used to screen the dumpsters. Mr. Sadowski asked for assurance that clearance for trash pick-up and snow storage had been taken into account. Mr. Clarke indicated that the plans show where the snow storage will take place. Ms. Francazio confirmed that the Applicant is saving room for two Zip Car spaces. Mr. Del Savio shared that bicycle racks will be located in garages as well as in front of the buildings without garages. The plan includes the capacity for 60 bicycles.

Ms. Gaffey reviewed the open issues for the next meeting, which included the following:

- Cornice detail
- Feedback from the Tozza-Washington Street streetscape meeting
- Recreation Area update
- Limit of new roadway pavement
- Sidewalk treatment on west side of Washington Street
- Modifications at Brazil Street
- Screening for Town Estates
- Consistent/Cohesive Lighting Plan
- Estimated cost for Fellsway East/Washington Street mitigation
- Treatment of sidewalks within the development

Mr. Sadowski inquired regarding the potential use of sloped granite curbing. Mr. Hammer indicated that sloped granite curbing would only be appropriate where there is lawn, not sidewalk.

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to continue the public hearing to May 18, 2009. Ms. DeSouza-Ward SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

ANR AUTHORIZATION

Ms. Gaffey explained that formal correspondence is needed to update the list of members who have been designated to sign ANRs on behalf of the Board. Ms. Marcus MADE a MOTION to authorize Ms. DeSouza Ward, Mr. Cassidy, and Mr. Connolly. Mr. Pawlina SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Ms. Gaffey circulated the formal letter to the Registry of Deeds for the members’ signatures.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.