

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Special Meeting & Public Hearing
Wednesday, December 3, 2008
7:45 p.m.
Aldermanic Chamber

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. Cassavoy.

MINUTES

a) Stone Place Site Visit, November 15, 2008

Mr. Sadowski MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of November 15, 2008. Mr. Connolly 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)

Robert Bell, the Applicant's representative, introduced the Development Team that includes Rob Del Savio from the Architect (Bargmann, Hendrie, Archetype, Inc), Nelson Hammer from the Landscape Architect (Hammer Design), Scott Thornton from the Traffic Engineer (Vanasse & Associates), and the Applicant, Tani Halperin with Mercer Properties, Inc. Mr. Bell stated that the Applicant has retained a new landscape architect. Mr. Bell indicated that this evening's meeting would include a brief presentation by the Architect to review revisions to the design as well as a presentation of the traffic study by the Traffic Engineer.

Mr. Del Savio, the Architect, distributed two revised drawings (L1.2 and A.7) and described the revisions to the design associated with Building E to purportedly give the structure greater articulation. Mr. Del Savio highlighted the addition of bays on the east and west facades and the terraces that have been added to the (private/non-public) courtyard side of the building. Mr. Hammer, the Landscape Architect, explained the upgrades to the streetscape plan that included the street trees on Washington Street and Pleasant Street with low hedges in front of Building E. Mr. Hammer shared that the walkways also have been reconfigured. In addition, an effort was made to screen the view of the parked vehicles from Building D. Mr. Del Savio indicated that Development Team looked forward to addressing the comments from the last meeting regarding Building A at a future meeting.

Mr. Bell introduced Scott Thornton to present the Traffic Study. Mr. Thornton expressed that the Applicant's proposal was a good project from a traffic standpoint. Mr. Thornton indicated that the traffic study that was performed for the zoning change was looked at for data for this report. Mr. Thornton highlighted the four driveways that access the development as well as the 423 parking spaces and 60 spaces for bicycle storage. Mr. Thornton pointed out that Applicant's proposal includes five (5) loaner bicycles. Mr. Thornton explained the assumptions that were used to project the 2013 traffic volumes. Mr. Thornton reviewed the intersections that were looked at in the Traffic Study which include Pleasant Street at Washington Street, Washington Street at Winter Street/Glenwood Street/Grove Street, Pleasant Street at Wyoming Avenue, and the driveways into the development. Mr. Thornton explained that standardized methodologies were used for the Built/No Build scenarios. In terms of trip generation, Mr. Thornton shared that 84 trips are projected during the weekday morning peak hour and 100 trips (study indicates 102) are projected during the weekday evening peak hour. Mr. Thornton indicated that the Traffic Study took into account recent nearby development such as Oak Grove Village and Webster

Willows. Mr. Thornton explained that the Registry of Motors was also taken into consideration despite the news of its impending relocation. From a Level of Service perspective, Mr. Thornton indicated that the Traffic Study shows no change at the intersections studied. Mr. Thornton shared that ways to reduce traffic demand include giving a MBTA pass for one month to each adult and the posting of the transit schedule in various locations. Mr. Thornton indicated that bicycle trips are encouraged. Mr. Thornton explained that stop signs are purposed for some of the approaches at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Washington Street to add control. Mr. Bell confirmed that the Level of Service on Washington Street/Pleasant Street remains the same by spreading the access/egress from the development over four driveways. Mr. Bell emphasized that the conservative approach that was taken in respect to the Traffic Study. Mr. Bell indicated that the Traffic Study builds in 1% growth in traffic volumes when actually there is no growth in the area as evident by the evaluations that were performed for Oak Grove Village. Mr. Bell indicated the Traffic Study uses the assumption that 40% of the residents travel by transit which is known to be higher based on statistics from Oak Grove Village. Mr. Bell also indicated that the Traffic Demand Management measures were not factored in to lower the projected impact.

Mr. Cassavoy proceeded to open the meeting to the public for questions and comments.

Fran Walsh, 96 Pleasant Street

Mr. Walsh inquired whether the MBTA pass that is proposed to be given to each adult resident would be for the subway or the commuter rail. Mr. Walsh also asked if the Applicant had considered running a shuttle to the transit stations. Mr. Thornton replied that the MBTA pass would be a combo pass that could be used for bus/subway. In respect to the shuttle bus question, Mr. Thornton explained that the 131 Bus serves Pleasant Street and that Development Team is looking into adding a bus shelter.

Gail Infurna, 198 Boston Rock Road

Alderman Infurna passed along a comment from one of her constituents who inquired what time of year the traffic data was collected and wanted to confirm whether the data took into account school traffic. Alderman Infurna requested that the traffic study look at the intersection of Washington Street and the Fellsway. Alderman Infurna raised the issue of excessive speed on Washington Street and asked that part of the mitigation assist with this issue. Alderman Infurna concluded by expressing her support for the project.

Carol McKinley, 407 Washington Street

Ms. McKinley expressed that the intersection of Washington Street and the Fellsway is treacherous and would like it to be addressed. Ms. McKinley shared that at the charrette for Longwood Commons the intersection of Washington Street and the Fellsway was proposed to be at a 90 degree angle. Ms. McKinley pointed out that Stoneham recently made Phillips Road and portions of Ravine Road a one way. Ms. McKinley also inquired regarding how "green" the buildings would be. Mr. Del Savio emphasized that the re-use of a two existing buildings and the possibility of the use of geo-thermal energy for Building C.

Mr. Cassavoy opened the meeting to questions from members of the Board.

Mr. Sadowski inquired regarding the LOS E classification at the intersection at Pleasant Street and Wyoming Avenue. Mr. Bell responded that this intersection is a failing movement and that the Applicant's proposal does not generate traffic at this location. Mr. Sadowski asked if the Traffic Study takes into consideration future development. Mr. Thornton indicated that the Traffic Study does not take into consideration projects that are not approved. Ms. Gaffey responded that the peer review consultant will comment on this in light of the future build out of the Smart Growth District. Mr. Pawlina pointed out that the anticipation for the area is a mix of commercial and residential and more retail uses would

likely increase the level of traffic. Mr. Thornton agreed that retail uses are more traffic intensive. Ms. Marcus was informed by Mr. Thornton that the traffic counts were conducted in May and November. Mr. Bell added that the data was cross checked by Mr. Thornton and pointed out that the data was collected when the Registry of Motor Vehicles was active. Mr. Bell stated that the Registry will be replaced and that its replacement will likely be a less intense use which also contributes to the conservative nature of the Traffic Study. Mr. Cassavoy asked why there is not two way traffic behind Building C in place of the emergency access. Mr. Del Savio indicated at first that the area is not wide enough to accommodate two way traffic, then expressed that it could be done. Mr. Cassavoy discussed the possibility of adding a turning lane onto Washington Street and also requested that the intersection of Washington Street and the Fellsway be reviewed.

Ms. Francazio asked whether it would be possible to reduce the parking spaces per unit to have a more positive effect on the drainage and open space on the site. Mr. Thornton indicated that the proposed parking plan meets what is required per zoning and he would be reluctant to reduce it further. Mr. Del Savio explained that the proposal is 34% open space which is increased due to the decrease in the length of Building F by 29 feet. As a result, Building F was reduced by 8 units which were picked up by Building C to maintain the grand total of 300 units. Mr. Bell added that the application exceeds the 25% open space requirement and pointed out that at Oak Grove Village the transit usage is high, however everyone still has vehicles. Mr. Bell shared that Oak Grove Village is interested in adding a Zip Car, but does not have the numbers alone and hopes that the combined area will make it possible. Ms. Francazio expressed an interest in seeing how far smart growth behavior can be pushed minimizing parking for the residential and making it available for retail.

Mr. Cassidy expressed that the elevations submitted by the Architect are a step in the right direction. Mr. Cassidy indicated that the Building E's long facade on Washington Street with the entrance on the side is disconcerting. He feels the building entrance should be on Washington Street. Mr. Cassidy suggested that adding the terraces on the west side of the building would open the building up better to the street. Mr. Cassidy emphasized the need to activate the building and pointed out that Oak Grove Village has a "penetrable" façade which is very successful. Mr. Cassidy stated that he does not see much in terms of improvements to the streetscape such as street furniture or pedestrian scale street lighting. Mr. Cassidy emphasized the need for the pedestrian to feel safe and well protected. Mr. Cassidy put forward the idea to recess the street and eliminate landscaping to accommodate parking.

Mr. Mercado inquired where the bus stop would be located. Mr. Thornton suggested that the bus stop be located before the intersection on Pleasant Street. Alderman Infurna added that presently bus stops are located at Brazil Street and in front of Town Estates. Mr. Mercado asked from where the accident data was acquired. Mr. Thornton indicated that the accident data was acquired from the State and covered a three year time period.

Mr. Pawlina expressed that the current layout would not work for commercial use because there is no parking in front of the buildings. Mr. Pawlina suggested that in order to encourage commercial use the buildings would need to be pushed back to mimic the Marty's furniture building, which would allow for the opportunity for retail in the future. Mr. Bell addressed the issue of mixed use by pointing out that the Smart Growth Ordinance encourages commercial use in the district but does not specify that commercial use shall be a component in all sites. Mr. Bell stated that both the Marty's Furniture Building and the Registry are two opportunities for commercial use. Mr. Bell explained that due to the nature of the Applicant's site/streetscape providing a mix of uses is difficult and stated that the Applicant is committed to 100% residential use due to market conditions. Mr. Pawlina added that due to the configuration of the site only Building A offers flexibility in terms of its location relative to Pleasant Street. Mr. Bell

responded that the area is more commercial further south and that the Applicant is trying to be friendly as possible to the residents on Pleasant Street.

Mr. Sadowski inquired where stop signs are proposed. Mr. Thornton replied stop signs are proposed to be positioned at each site driveway and on Stone Place at the intersection of Washington Street and on Stone Place at the intersection of Pleasant Street

Mr. Cassavoy discussed with the members possible dates for continuation of the public hearing. Ms. Gaffey updated the Board regarding to the peer review. After consultation with the Board, Mr. Cassavoy announced that the public hearing would be continued to January 7, 2009 at 7:45 PM. SO MOVED by Mr. Pawlina.

Ms. Gaffey referenced the letter that was distributed to the members from the City of Malden. Ms. Gaffey indicated that Mayor Dolan is communicating with the Mayor of Malden to work out these issues and suggested that the Board wait until these issues are resolved before discussing the matter.

OTHER

Proposed Specialty Food Stores Zoning Amendment

Ms. Gaffey suggested to the Board that a letter to the Aldermen be drafted in advance of the joint public hearing for the proposed Specialty Food Stores Zoning Amendment to make for a more substantive discussion. Ms. Gaffey explained that the planning staff would draft the letter and review it with Ms. DeSouza-Ward. Ms. DeSouza-Ward MADE a MOTION to draft a letter to the Aldermen outlining the Board's position in advance of the joint public hearing. Ms. Marcus SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Francazio SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.