



PLANNING BOARD

Linda K. Hamlin, Chairman
Steven A. Heikin, Clerk
Robert Cook
Blair Hines
Sergio Modigliani
Matthew Oudens
Mark J. Zarrillo

Town of Brookline Massachusetts

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**BROOKLINE PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Room 111, First Floor, Brookline Town Hall
May 12, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.**

Board Present: Linda Hamlin, Steven Heikin, Robert Cook, Blair Hines, Sergio Modigliani, Matthew Oudens, and Mark Zarrillo

Staff Present: Polly Selkoe, Maria Morelli

Chair Linda Hamlin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

BOARD OF APPEALS CASES

201 Summit Avenue – construct a second story addition (928 s.f.) on a single family requiring FAR relief (5/19) Pct. 11

[Linda Hamlin recused herself from the case.]

Polly Selkoe described the proposal to construct a second story addition and the relief the applicant is seeking.

The applicant's representative described the proposal.

Steven Heikin asked for public comment.

There was no public comment.

Robert Cook inquired about the surrounding FAR proportions and commented he is in favor of this expansion.

Steven Heikin commented that the combination of the deck, screen, and hot tub on high posts is awkward in appearance and looks tall due to the thin posts.

The board generally agreed to support the project.

Steven Heikin motioned to recommend approval.

Robert Cook seconded the motion.

Voted (6-0): the Planning Board recommends approval of the of the site plan submitted by Brice Bradford, dated 5/12/14, and the architectural plans by Linda Hamlin, dated 1/27/2016, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan, floor plans including existing and proposed gross floor area calculations, and elevations, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit to the Building Commissioner for review and approval for conformance to the Board of Appeals decision: 1) a final site plan stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; 2) final floor plans and elevations stamped and signed by a registered architect; and 3) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

~~**44 Coolidge Street** – convert a single to a two-family dwelling, and construct a two-story addition and a garage with living space above, requiring rear yard setback and design of parking relief (5/19) Pct. 9~~

111 Marion Street – demolish building and construct a four story building with three residential units and parking below requiring design review, FAR, front, side and rear yard setback, and usable open space relief (5/19) Pct. 10

[Blair Hines recused himself.]

Polly Selkoe described the proposal to demolish a building and construct a new four story building.

Attny. Scott Gladstone stated the design is compatible and referred to surrounding buildings.

Kent Duckham, the project's architect, also felt the design fit in well with the surrounding neighborhood.

Linda Hamlin asked for public comment.

John Randall voiced several concerns for this project. First was a concern over how the new building would impact access to the rear of his building on Beacon Street. Mr. Randall also had a concern over potential drainage issues, snow management in the winter months, garage disposal and how the new building's shadow would impact his sunlight exposure.

A neighbor who runs a daycare center in the building abutting the project site was not concerned over the end result of the building, but about construction management. The daycare center he runs uses the back passageway as their emergency exit and he is concerned it would be blocked during construction.

The board discussed the tension between the applicant's desire to build only two residential units and the zoning requirement to construct three residential units, coupled with the additional parking required. There was consensus among the board that these requirements are interfering with the applicant's ability to design something that is a better fit for this street, specifically in regards to the double garage doors on the lot line. The board has many concerns over pedestrian safety with having the garage doors on the lot line.

Matthew Oudens commented that he has an issue with the double garage doors on the street and felt it was unsettling. He discussed the possibility of reducing the number of parked cars.

Mark Zarrillo felt the proposed FAR was not acceptable, though he understood there are other buildings in the area that have zero lot lines. Mr. Zarrillo felt the project is too high, too big, and has too much FAR and therefore he cannot support it; he would be open to a project that required less parking.

The board discussed the scope of the project, its massing and if a variance for parking would be appropriate for the applicant to consider.

Steven Heikin commented he would support a project with less massing.

Scott Gladstone put forth to the board that his project will be a much better use than what currently exists. Further, they have changed and adjusted their design to meet with the suggestions and comments from the town.

Linda Hamlin suggested the applicant seek parking relief because the current design of the garage doors is not acceptable to the board, citing they do not help the neighborhood. She would, however, be in support a similar size building with only one garage door.

Steven Heikin stated he does not approve of the current design but would like to see the changes the board has discussed.

Mark Zarrillo commented the project is too big, citing issues with density and with granting exceptions to side, rear, and front setbacks. He would be in favor of a use variance. He is not opposed to a zero lot line, but is opposed to almost double FAR; he would approve a smaller project.

Sergio Modigliani felt his opinions regarding the proposal align with Mr. Zarrillo's. Mr. Modigliani posited zoning should work to the benefit of the community, and understands the dilemma the applicant is in. The zoning should work to get a better result which is not the case in this situation.

There was a general consensus among the board that a FAR close to 4 is too high, but would support a variance for parking.

The board recommended that the case be continued. The applicant agreed to continue the case.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON COMMENTS TO ZBA ON 40B PROPOSAL FOR PUDDINGSTONE AT CHESTNUT HILL (265-299 Gerry Rd.) to construct 186 apartments in a new 6-story building and 12 apartments in three new 2½-story buildings, to renovate 28 apartments in three existing 2-story buildings, and to construct 350 parking spaces (including 283 spaces in a two-level below-grade garage and 67 surface spaces) on a 5.44 acre portion of the Hancock Village property accessed off Independence Drive from Gerry Road (5/9 & 6/6) Pct. 16

Maria Morelli updated the board and public on Puddingstone at Chestnut Hill. She provided a design analysis of the proposal and submitted a draft letter for the Board's consideration.

There will be a site visit on Thursday May 24th at 8:30a.m. for the ZBA.

The applicant has agreed to peer review and Ms. Morelli asked the board to focus on the design of the project. The next public meeting is June 6th and Ms. Morelli asked the board to consider what issues the working group should address.

There were five main areas discussed by the board and members present from the public:

1. Physical impact:

- Steven Heikin commented that the project does not provide open space and the lot lines take away existing courtyard areas from existing residents. Further, Mr. Heikin commented that he was not aware of any other 40B project that has taken away open space.

- A resident from 265 Reservoir Road commented that regulating land-use should be understood in terms such as height, bulk and sizing.
- 2. Design and building placement concerns:**
 - The building typology is incongruous with the surrounding environment.
 - There was general discussion among the board that the placement of the buildings imposed on existing residents and should be placed in a more strategic location.
 - Blair Hines and Steven Heikin agreed that the upper left quadrant would be a better location. Mr. Heikin further described the possibility of pulling the buildings to the street. Sherman, Gerry and Independence could benefit if the buildings were sited along these existing streets.
- 3. Requests for more information:**
 - The members of the board had several follow up questions regarding the design and layout of the project and thus had several requests for documents to better inform themselves of the scope and impact of the project. They would like to see a current grading chart, more detailed topography, and a full size plan to scale.
- 4. Strategies for preparing for the ZBA:**
 - The board also discussed the Neighborhood Conversation District and the site's eligibility for National Register of Historic Places. Sergio Modigliani commented that the National Register controls the use of Federal and State money.
 - Blair Hines commented that the impetus behind this project is to gather more value from the land and asked if it would be worth taking the position that the board are not opposed to increased density. He further commented about the cost of demolishing buildings compared to blasting puddingstone.
 - Steven Chimenti brought up the rules that 40B projects must follow and called into question many elements in the proposed design that are in opposition to those rules.
 - The town is an abutter to the development.
 - The 40A law was brought into question, specifically if there is nonconformity in the project, such as taking away a single parking space.
 - Scott Gladstone made the argument that the way the project is subdivided should be considered as creating nonconformity.
 - Sergio Modigliani expressed a concern over the accurate representation of the FAR and wants to see a zoning analysis.
 - Maria Morelli commented they intend to scrutinize the parking plans and complete a comprehensive zoning analysis.
- 5. Next steps draft letter to the ZBA:**
 - There was a comment to change a bullet on page two from "large-rise" to "high-rise."
 - The board agreed to look over the letter and provide comments to Ms. Morelli to be discussed and possibly ratified at the June 2 meeting.
 - Linda Hamlin concluded the meeting by saying there are macro and micro climate issues to consider in reviewing this project.

Minutes

Voted (7-0): Minutes of the March 17, April 14, and April 28 of the year 2016 meetings were approved with corrections noted.

Meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Materials Reviewed During Meeting: Staff Reports, Site Plans, and Elevations