



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
July 14, 2016 – 7:30 p.m.**

Board Present: Linda Hamlin, Steven Heikin, Robert Cook, Sergio Modigliani, and Mark Zarrillo

Staff Present: Polly Selkoe, Maria Morelli, Ashley Clark, Karen Martin

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

BOARD OF APPEALS CASES

1517 Beacon Street- Convert a three-family to a four-family and add three parking spaces in the basement in addition to the three garaged spaces.

Polly Selkoe presented the case and described the relief required.

Attorney Cameron Merrill, representing the owners, described the documents included in the packets submitted to the Planning Board and introduced the architect, Gary Hendren of Hendren Associates.

Mr. Hendren presented the context of the project and the proposed plans.

The Planning Board discussed the excavation process to accommodate the elevator to service units as well as accommodate the storage of cars in the garage. The board asked clarifying questions over the width of the driveway at the rear of the building connecting to the garage. Mr. Heikin referenced the drawings and inquired if the garage would be able to appropriately fit garbage bins as well as the planned bicycle storage.

Mr. Modigliani inquired about the parking requirements. Ms. Selkoe clarified that when a building is converted the parking requirements are recalculated and the Board can allow for half of the required number of spaces by special permit which for this project rounds to five spaces.

There was a discussion of whether the applicant has reviewed the stairs and egress with the Building Department. The Applicant confirmed the stairs and egress were acceptable to the Building Department.

Mr. Zarrillo inquired about the carbon monoxide ventilation from the parking areas. There was a discussion about the depth of the garage and accommodating the ventilation of the fumes. The applicant stated he would look into ventilation issues because it had not been discussed previously.

Mr. Cook confirmed the applicant's preference for six spaces compared to five.

Mr. Modigliani discussed the bicycle storage near the car spaces and whether the bike storage would be a common amenity. Mr. Merrill stated the details regarding the bicycle storage have not been worked out to date but the concept is for it to be common space.

Mr. Heikin stated that the six spaces do not have a negative impact on abutters other than the need for cars to wait in the driveway while pulling in and out of the tandem spaces.

Ms. Hamlin asked for public comment.

Karen, resident of Babcock Street, described the parking conditions in her building and felt parking should be an addition to the rent.

Scott Ananian of 103 Griggs Road, discussed a concern over the back retaining wall being pushed by a large tree. He stated there are three trees growing between the retaining wall and is concerned they will push the wall over. Mr. Ananian did not feel the tree is sustainable in that space. Mr. Merrill stated that the applicants have agreed to repave the entire passage way in the back and redo the crumbling staircases, which are used by every occupant in the whole row. Mr. Merrill stated that the tree situation will be looked into when this work happens and asked for Mr. Ananian's contact information.

Mr. Modigliani inquired about the property line submitted which indicates that some of the way may be under ownership of the applicant. Mr. Merrill stated he had no information regarding the property line but will gather more information.

The owner of 1515 Beacon Street, **Ninotchka Yee**, stated that she is in support of the proposal because she is happy to see renovations happening in the building and is glad the applicant plans to rebuild the front entrance into the building and preserve architectural details.

Jessica Walnut of 103 Griggs Road stated when cars enter the passageway car headlights go into her living room and have an impact on her yard. Ms. Walnut stated her preference would be for five spaces and inquired if a traffic study had been made.

Planning Board Comments

Mr. Modigliani credited the applicant's subtle treatment in terms of the units with no changes visible on Beacon Street.

Mr. Modigliani is concerned about the parking and his inclination is to not permit the 6th space and not allow the parking spaces to be sold as part of the condominium structure. Mr. Hines agreed with Mr. Modigliani regarding the sixth space and felt they should allow for five parking spaces. Mr.

Heikin and Ms. Hamlin were also in agreement regarding reducing the parking from six spaces to five.

Ms. Hamlin stated she appreciated the public benefit regarding the work in the driveway and stairwell. Ms. Hamlin suggested speaking with abutters regarding their concerns.

Mr. Hines inquired about the roof deck and whether it would be common use as well and about its design. Mr. Hines also had a concern regarding the wall and feels this wall should be evaluated especially as the tree continues to grow. Mr. Hines suggested perhaps a fence over the wall. Mr. Merrill stated their ability to change it is limited due to the easement though stated he would study it and explore options. Mr. Modigliani felt a fence should be considered very much as a favor to the abutters. Mr. Heikin referred to the rear abutters who expressed concerns regarding the wall and suggested meeting with them to discuss screening to be covered by the developer. Discussion of a recommendation to remove trees ensued. The applicant will explore options and speak with neighbors.

***Steven Heikin motioned to recommend approval.
Robert Cook seconded the motion.***

Voted (6-0): The Planning Board recommends approval of the plans submitted by Hendren Associates, dated 3/18/16, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit final floor plans, elevations, and parking plans, limited to five cars, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
- 2) Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan, including landscaping, fencing and possible tree removal, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
- 3) Prior to a certificate of occupancy, the common passageway shall be repaved and the two stairs to it repaired.
- 4) Prior to 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 building elevations and floor plans stamped and signed by a registered architect; and 3) evidence the decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

420 HARVARD STREET 40B PROPOSAL PLANNING BOARD DESIGN ANALYSIS

Maria Morelli from the Planning Department discussed the process for 40B. One way to ensure that the community's interests are best represented is by focusing on what the impacts are and how they can be mitigated. Ms. Morelli explained the Planning Board has a packet to review and explained the purpose of this meeting is for the Planning Board to consider comments to submit regarding the project.

Ms. Morelli discussed recent events around a fire at the Butcherie as well as a recent change in ownership of an abutting property. Ms. Morelli assured the members of the public present she will find out who bought the property and that if it is the developer of the proposal, she will share the implications of that ownership and the ZBA will be informed as well.

Ms. Morelli presented the context of the 40B at 420 Harvard and reviewed the project specifications. The presentation included Harvard Street elevations of the front façade, as well as existing conditions of the site.

Mr. Heikin expressed a concern over the market rate units and affordable units not being comparable in size.

Mr. Hines expressed a concern over the setbacks and having windows and balconies against the property line presuming the property next door does not do something. The Board discussed concern over tightness to edge. Mr. Modigliani had a question over why a sidewall is blank.

Ms. Morelli discussed site sections which show incongruity with the street, largely related to height. The Board will want to analyze if the angle of sky plane is well developed.

The study submitted has not looked at the proposed developments already in the pipeline. Ms. Morelli stated there is enough detail about prospective developments to include them. Further, Ms. Morelli stated there were not enough retail scenarios included in the traffic scope.

The site design shows a wide driveway and a sharp turn. Staff would like to see some turning radii. Ms. Morelli stated she would like to see how driving visibility is impacted when exiting the driveway as well as the impact of the elevators on the wait time or queuing area for cars. The car stackers are at ground level and there is no buffer between them and the two family district, thus noise impacts are a concern. Ms. Morelli stated the Engineering Department would assess the hydraulic parking.

It was discussed that there is not adequate parking provided. The application only proposes a total of 29 spaces for residents and does not account for parking for the retail portion where 1 space per 200 square feet is required.

The Planning Board summarized its top concerns for the project which include:

- Far too close to abutting property on Fuller Street
- Deeper setbacks needed

- Large disparity in sizes of apartments. Not acceptable if the larger units are market rate and all the small ones are affordable and poorly laid out/located
- Individual unit floor plans have not been articulated
- Too many decks. Not necessarily a bad feature but overwhelming in this context.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Lea Cohen, 1060 Beacon Street: Stated that her understanding is that the owner of ReMax office is a partner and the retail portion will remain as his space.

Ernest Adams, 129 Centre Street: Brought up the issue of pedestrian safety. Seniors using walkers are always on Fuller Street.

Jane Adams: Was wondering if pedestrian traffic could be studied. In one day 20 people on walkers use this area as their main walkway and she can't imagine adding a number of cars or garage entrances on Fuller Street.

Judith Vandacate, 68 Columbia Street: The proposal is monstrosity from backyard. Shared her concern of safety related to the senior housing on Center Street and Fuller Street. A lot of emergency vehicles frequent those buildings.

Colm McMahon and Caroline Buckley, 45 Coolidge Street: Abutters to the top left corner. One thing in recommendations that has not been mentioned is the height of the buildings. The height generates all these other problems such as parking. Need to know noise impact according to state requirements. Also has concern in terms of environmental impacts. Why can't the parking be underground?

Jerry Katz, 434 Harvard Street: Fuller Street is extremely narrow – worried about parking especially when it snows.

Julie Palmer, 48 Coolidge Street: Her main issue is the height but she also worries about the Butcherie with all day long delivery trucks. She cited the recent fire and concerns of what will happen in the future in properties around this project.

George Abbott White, 143 Winchester Street (TMM): Neighbors are concerned about what is happening to community. He has never received so many emails from neighbors citing concerns and trying to inform themselves as he has for this project.

Karen, Babcock Street: Project at location is big and feels the owner is stingy on floor plans in making them too small as well as disparity in design is not fair depending on what is paid. Neighbors should be concerned about the shadow effect and 3-D effect along with noise. She is in support of the project because in her experience a 40B is full of mixed income and good tenants. Density makes per unit costs cheaper for heat and air conditioning. Karen spoke in favor of 40B projects on appropriate sites.

Beth Kates, 105 Center Street: Want to expand on the safety issues not only in neighborhood but also for homes for disabled people. The Devotion School and students walking will be impacted by this project. A building of this massing sets a horrible precedent for destroying Harvard Street and the streetscape.

Geoff Otto, former owner of 49 Coolidge: Was present tonight because still cares and has committed funds to this legal affair. Their understanding was that they were selling their home to a business owner who wanted to have a residence closer to their business. He just received an email that the developer purchased the home and planned this unbeknownst to them. (This is currently a rumor that is pending verification).

Leo, 97 Center Street: Concern over the project having enough space for parking and taking away the parking for loading on Fuller Street.

Judith Vanderkay, 16 Columbia Street: Questioned if there is anything about character of the developer considered in a 40B proposal such as a morality clause. It is distressing that the developer may have purchased an abutting property using false pretenses.

Mr. Heikin stated that the building is too big and does not respect the separation between commercial and residential districts. Even under a 40B scenario there should be recognition to separate a mixed use apartment building from a single family residence. He also noted that the site is large enough to allow for parking below grade i.e. parking allowing a reduced building height.

Mr. Hamlin stated that this is a contextual issue alone. This commercial strip on Harvard is one story, rarely two stories. Need to consider the percentage height above that and need to draw real comparisons to what they are presenting.

Ms. Hamlin stated there is no vote on this issue tonight. The purpose of the presentation and discussion was to gather information and share comments.

The minutes for June 30, 2016 Planning Board Meeting were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Materials Reviewed During Meeting: Staff Reports, Site Plans, Elevations, Planning Staff PowerPoint Presentation