

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**



MEETING NOTES

Coolidge Corner Study Committee Members Present: Lauren Bernard, Roger Blood, Frank Caro, Alan Christ, Catherine Donaher, Linda Hamlin, Ken Lewis, Anne Meyers, Linda Olson Pehlke, Susan Roberts.

Coolidge Corner Study Committee Members Absent: Neil Wishinsky, Elton Elperin, Steve Kanes, Sergio Modigliani, Maura Toomey.

Planning Board Members Present: Steve Heikin, Linda Hamlin, James Carr, Bob Cook, Blair Hines, Mark Zarrillo.

Planning Board Members Absent: Matt Oudens

Staff: Kara Brewton

Guests: Representatives from Chestnut Hill Realty including Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert (Law Office of Robert L. Allen, Jr.), Marc Levin, Ed Zuker, Theo Kindermans (Stantec), Jacob Bloom (Cambridge Seven Architects); several residents including Jonathan Davis, Keith Grove, Robert Miller.

Materials: Agenda (2-6-19); Draft CCSC Meeting Minutes (1-2-19); Draft CCSC Architecture Subcommittee Minutes (1-24-19); Zoning By-Law Amendment (1-30-19); Draft Design Guidelines (1-30-19); Program Summary (CHR, 2-4-19); powerpoint visual of Zoning Boundary change (2-6-19) and first floor plans (CHR, 1-14-19)

Linda Hamlin opened the meeting, explaining that Neil Wishinsky asked her to chair this joint meeting in his absence.

Meeting Minutes

Ken Lewis asked whether Steve Kanes' name should be removed from the agendas as an absent member, since he had not attended meetings for a very long time, and this impacts quorum and voting percentages. Kara Brewton explained that she had asked Steve for an email clarifying whether he had resigned or not, and Steve was not sure whether he wanted to.

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**

The Coolidge Corner Study Committee members approved the 1-2-19 minutes. The draft Architecture Subcommittee Minutes from January 24th could not be approved since a quorum of the Subcommittee was present at this meeting.

Overview of Draft Zoning Structure

Kara Brewton introduced the overall structure of the proposed draft zoning article. She showed the proposed boundary change that would result in all of the Chestnut Hill Realty (CHR) parcels being in the same zoning district, G-1.75(CC). The purpose of proposing an Overlay District boundary to include the entire block of Beacon-Harvard-Green-John-Pleasant was to encourage the Committee's desire for the hotel building to have a physical presence on one of the main commercial streets. Other provisions such as a maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for a development project and a lower FAR for the entire block could then allow for flexibility about the ultimate location and specific design of the mixed-use development within the block, but the overall FAR for the entire block would remain the same as the current proposal.

Discussion included:

- Some Planning Board members proposing the flexibility be expanded such that the adjacent commercial parcels on Harvard and Beacon Streets could have a significantly increased FAR (say, 3.3) in addition to the proposed project, independent of whether that parcel was connected to, or part of, the proposed project. They thought it was important to encourage what we would like to see happen on the entire block over the long haul.
- Ken Lewis noted that the two different FARs would likely confuse things at Town Meeting.
- Catherine Donaher and Linda Olson Pehlke felt strongly that the Overlay District should be reduced to only the CHR parcels, as significant, careful discussion had occurred for the specific development proposal but not for the adjacent parcels. The threat of the active 40B Comprehensive Permit application meant that the Coolidge Corner Study Committee (CCSC) had only been able to work towards an alternative to the Comprehensive Permit. If the Comprehensive Permit were not an option, then the scope and pace of the Committee's discussions would have been broadened.
- Alan Christ suggested that perhaps the Overlay District could include the adjacent commercial parcel abutting Pleasant Street owned by the Banks family, since that was where the Committee had focused their discussion as the most appropriate place for a massing transition between the very tall proposed residential building to the existing 1- and 2-story commercial buildings on this block.

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**

- Following further discussion, Kara asked for the following votes from the 10 Coolidge Corner Study Committee members: that the Overlay District included the CHR parcels (passed with 7 raising their hands in support); that the Overlay District also include the adjacent Banks parcel (failed with 3 raising their hands in support); that the Overlay District include the entire block (failed with 5 raising their hands in support).

Required Project Components of Overlay District

Kara Brewton called attention to Item 7(k)(2), which includes minimum requirements for any proposed project utilizing the overlay district provisions.

Discussion included:

- Defining Open Space – Kara noted that the concept of the proposed language is that it would include the equivalent area of off-site landscaped area that CHR had agreed to provide. Jennifer Gilbert noted that CHR had a concern about this provision, since the CCSC could not compel a future Select Board to issue a license to allow such conversion of a municipal parking lot to landscaped area; she thought it made more sense for that commitment to be documented in the Developer’s Agreement. Blair Hines suggested that the open space should include the space on-site (private property) where significant greenery is proposed, which could include the Waldo Street sidewalk adjacent to the residential building. Kara requested additional assistance from Blair to show in diagram and definition form what he thought should be open space.
- Catherine Donaher reviewed her proposed concept of having two different maximum FARs for the project – with and without the additional mezzanine floor recently proposed by Chestnut Hill Realty to accommodate a shared work space area. The Committee agreed to this concept.
- Ken Lewis commented that the active retail or restaurant floor ground floor space along Pleasant Street was very important to the community, and proposed the following addition to this section: “f) Must be active ground level uses including a minimum of X square feet, with access to Pleasant St.” James Carr wondered whether some of the mechanical or back-of-house operations shown on the first floor of the residential building could be moved to one of the garage levels. Kara invited Committee members to further define what ‘active ground level uses’ meant, e.g., retail or service uses, etc. The Committee generally agreed that this should be

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**

defined as “100% commercial use along, and with an entrance from, Pleasant Street, including a minimum of 1,000 square feet of retail or restaurant space.”

Relationship to Design Guidelines

Kara Brewton noted that Linda Olson Pehlke had suggested that either the Design Guidelines or the Zoning should specify a minimum building setback from John Street. The Committee agreed to add cross-section diagrams in the Guidelines, and then revisit whether additional language was also needed in the Zoning By-Law.

Regarding site circulation, Linda Olson Pehlke would like to see in the Design Guidelines the documentation that the current concept be one-way from Pleasant Street for all development traffic, except those loading operations for the hotel utilizing the alley behind the hotel. Jennifer Gilbert also offered that this could be special permit condition that the Developer agrees to not appeal, documented in the Developer’s Agreement.

Linda noted that she would still like to see a traffic analysis of all the traffic only utilizing John Street for entry/exit. James Carr agreed that having a pedestrian-only area for the part of Waldo Street north of the existing service alley would be preferred. Other Planning Board and Coolidge Corner Study Committee members had differing opinions on whether that would be a preferable site circulation design.

Maximums

Regarding maximum height, the Committee agreed that the height should be further restricted for the area of the site where the proposed hotel is located (8-10 stories). This could be accomplished with additional language and a site diagram.

Garage Parking

Kara Brewton reviewed the latest parking program as proposed by CHR, which includes additional parking spaces that would be displaced from the town parcel on John/Green Streets, spaces that would accommodate existing parking behavior from tenants of the Banks and Stoller properties, and additional spaces for the co-working space and café area. Linda Olson Pehlke thought that the concept of shared parking by different uses was not adequately considered in this proposal if CHR really thought they needed additional parking to accommodate the proposed co-working space. Ed Zuker stated that he was indifferent about whether or not the project included co-working space.

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**

Ken Lewis noted the final garage parking design might need to accommodate zipcars. Lauren Bernard added that there is a waiting list currently for the John Street parking lot, and teachers and merchants consistently state that they need more parking availability for employees; she felt that while the current proposal may be too much parking for the proposed project, she couldn't state that there is enough parking now in Coolidge Corner. Anne Meyers agreed that the need for additional parking spaces in the area was definitely a perception with both merchants and residents in this area.

Ken Lewis stated that building parking was dilutive to the total returns, and that there was a market check about the amount of parking that would be proposed at the time of the Special Permit. Linda Olson Pehlke and Catherine Donaher argued that limiting the supply of parking would limit traffic trips and therefore greenhouse gas emissions. Others on the Committee noted that if the parking was too small, cars would continue to circle looking for a space as they do now. Ken Lewis and Linda Olson Pehlke debated on whether having a maximum amount of parking would narrow the type of residents willing to live in this location. Ken Lewis and Linda Olson Pehlke agreed that having a parking minimum would also have an effect on the type of residents willing to live in this location. Ed Zuker noted that his experience at 1443 Beacon was that empty-nesters when they first moved from a single-family home were still looking for, on average, 1.4 spaces per unit. However, over time those same residents dropped their demand down to 1.1 spaces per unit.

After further discussion, the Committee voted (8-2-0) in favor of explicitly stating in the proposed zoning by-law that there did not need to be a parking minimum. The proposed language would be "The required number of parking spaces may be reduced by Special Permit, following review and favorable recommendation by the Planning Board."

Committee members had differing views of whether there should be a parking maximum. Linda Hamlin noted that she could not at this time opine that CHR's current proposed uses and parking program should be the basis to set a maximum number of spaces. Kara asked for a straw vote of how many people were interested in adding a maximum by number of spaces, and three committee members raised their hands. No motion was made, and Kara noted that for now the Zoning By-Law draft stood with a concept of maximum parking infrastructure by square feet.

Sunset Provision

Catherine Donaher suggested that the proposed zoning include a "sunset" provision, so that it would effectively disappear from the Zoning By-Law after some reasonable amount of time for Chestnut Hill Realty to apply for a special permit for the proposed mixed-use development. She added that if the Committee did not have a 40B Comprehensive Permit

**Coolidge Corner Study Committee
and
Planning Board Joint Meeting
February 6, 2019**

hanging as a threat, and there was more time to discuss appropriate zoning for the entire area, then she would feel more comfortable with the proposed Zoning By-Law. Ken Lewis agreed that the sunset provision was a good idea, as long as there was a reasonable window for CHR to apply for the special permit. Linda Olson Pehlke noted that this Zoning By-Law is not what the Committee wants, but for the 40B threat. The Committee generally agreed that the sunset provision should be included in the proposed Zoning By-law.

Next Steps

Kara Brewton reminded the Committee that the February 11th meeting would be the one of two meetings with Pam McKinney prior to the warrant article deadline, and that if anyone had comments on her scope as laid out in Kara's January 30th memo to the Planning Board and CCSC, to email her and/or we could discuss it further on February 11th with Pam.

Kara also noted that we did not have a date determined yet for the last week of February since several Committee members had not responded to the "doodle" scheduling poll.

A Committee member requested that we try to get the February 11th meeting videotaped with Brookline Interactive Group.

Meeting Adjourned