



# Town of Brookline Massachusetts

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## PLANNING BOARD

Steve Heikin, Chair  
James Carr  
Linda K. Hamlin  
Blair Hines  
Matthew Oudens  
Mark J. Zarrillo

## BROOKLINE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES By Zoom Event March 11, 2021 – 7:30 p.m.

**Board Present:** Steve Heikin, James Carr, Mark Zarrillo, Matthew Oudens, and Blair Hines

**Staff Present:** Victor Panak

Steve Heikin opened the meeting.

### 1) PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comments on matters not on the agenda.

### 2) BOARD OF APPEALS CASE (Tentative Zoning Board of Appeals Hearing Date) and relevant Precinct:

**14 Green Street** – Demolish existing building and construct a 3-story mixed-use building with 5 residential units requiring zoning relief for floor area ratio, setbacks, open space, and parking. (3/25) Pct. 8

Victor Panak described the proposal and the requested relief and noted that the Planning Department is supportive. Mr. Heikin asked some clarifying questions about FAR requirements and changes to the staff report.

Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert (attorney) introduced members of the team and discussed the design process and zoning relief.

Dennis Greenwood (architect) provided the Board with a presentation of the plans.

Mr. Hines raised concerns about how wide sidewalks should be and how the building façade should interact with the public space. Mr. Hines also wondered whether the loss of commercial space is something that the Town should be interested in. Mr. Heikin agreed with Mr. Hines' concerns. Mr. Oudens echoed those concerns and added that the commercial space is not only small but particularly shallow, making it almost unusable. Mr. Oudens suggested that the commercial space be extended up to the front lot line. Mr. Carr said he is opposed to the conversion of Brookline's commercial areas into 4-5 story buildings. Mr. Carr

also agreed with Mr. Oudens suggestion about extending the storefront to the front property line.

Mr. Zarrillo raised the question as to how the building could have an FAR of 2.0 in a G-1.75 zoning district without requiring a Special Permit for FAR. Mr. Zarrillo also agreed with the comments from other Board members.

Mr. Hines suggested that the parking requirement is forcing a smaller commercial area in the building than is appropriate.

Bob Allen (attorney) argued that the Town needs 4-5 story mixed-use buildings.

The Board and applicant continued to discuss the benefits of larger or smaller retail spaces and what would provide the best benefits to the Coolidge Corner commercial area.

The Board discussed the landscaped area at the front of the building and whether it is worth including.

The Board discussed counterbalancing amenities. Mr. Carr suggested that the building be pushed back significantly to allow for some pleasant public space. Mr. Allen stated that the landscape buffer and the sustainability elements of the building qualify as counterbalancing amenities. The Board did not feel that the landscaped area was sufficient as a counterbalancing amenity.

#### Public Comment

Ben Hirsh, 17 Green Street, wanted to support the comments of the Planning Board. Mr. Hirsh emphasized the importance of thriving small businesses. Mr. Hirsh was opposed to the project.

Diane Sokal, 161 Cypress Street, encouraged the applicant to incorporate more sustainability elements into the project.

Linda Olson Pehlke, 48 Brown Street, pointed out that parking on the first floor in the Coolidge Corner Overlay District counts towards the FAR. Ms. Pehlke also was skeptical about how the building could meet an FAR of 2.0. Ms. Pehlke was also concerned with replacing commercial buildings like the existing one with large 4-story buildings.

Mr. Heikin said that the property is certainly subject to the parking provision highlighted by Ms. Pehlke and said that the Planning Board likely cannot approve the building at this meeting.

Mr. Zarrillo emphasized that the revised project must include robust counterbalancing amenities.

Mr. Carr emphasized the need for the building to be designed with proper sustainable building designs.

**The case was continued.**

**74 Perry Street** – Convert existing single-family house to two-family house requiring zoning relief for setbacks, open space, and parking design. (3/25) Pct. 7

Victor Panak described the proposal and the requested relief and noted that the Planning Department is supportive.

Ken Goldstein (attorney) introduced the project and the members of the team and provided the Board with a presentation of the plans.

Evan Stellman (architect) reviewed the proposed plans for the Board.

Mr. Heikin asked that the distinctive dormer in the carriage house be preserved.

Mr. Hines indicated he is supportive of the proposal but suggested that the entrance to the carriage house be revised a bit.

Mr. Carr and Mr. Zarrillo both felt that the project is a good one.

Mr. Heikin noted that there is some neighborhood opposition primarily on the grounds of parking difficulties.

Public Comment

Ann Berman, 76 Perry Street, indicated that at least 5 of the abutters are against the project. Ms. Berman raised concerns with parking on the private way and how the addition of a housing unit could affect the problematic parking conditions. Ms. Berman suggested that the carriage house should be used for parking.

Amy Cohen, 82 Perry Street, also raised concerns about circulation and parking and said she is opposed to the project.

Jay Han, 80 Perry Street, suggested that the carriage house may be used as a third unit at some point. He was also concerned about snow storage.

Jerema Wolosenko, 71 Perry Street, is happy to see the building being renovated but said he is very concerned about parking on the private way.

Ed Bonfilio, 70 Perry Street, felt that parking and circulation would not be an issue and was supportive of the project.

Mr. Goldstein responded to some of the abutter comments.

Mr. Hines suggested that the driveway be widened up to the edge of the house to provide more maneuverability. Mr. Hines indicated he is supportive.

Mr. Oudens said he supports the proposal and thinks it is well thought-out.

Mr. Zarrillo said he supports the project and said he feels that the private way should be wide enough. He also felt that the additional housing unit being proposed should not have a significant effect on circulation or parking.

Mr. Carr said he supports the project but wonders whether the home occupation use should be cited. Mr. Panak clarified that the proposed office space in the carriage house is personal office space rather than a home occupation.

Mr. Heikin stated he supports the proposal and said he wants the carriage house barn door preserved.

Ann Berman reemphasized circulation and parking concerns. Mr. Han echoed Ms. Berman's concerns.

**Mr. Heikin moved to recommend approval of the site plan by Neponset Valley Survey Assoc., Inc., dated 1/4/21, and architectural plans by Khalsa Design, dated 3/4/21, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit final floor plans and elevations, stamped and signed by a registered architect, and a final site plan, stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor, to the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning for review and approval.**
- 2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit a landscape plan that shows proposed counterbalancing amenities subject to approval by the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning. The counterbalancing amenities must be executed in accordance to the approved plan.**
- 3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit to the Building Commissioner for review and approval a) the site plan, floor plans, and elevations displaying the approval stamp of the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning; and b) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been obtained from the Town Clerk's office by the applicant or their representative and recorded at the Registry of Deeds.**

**Mr. Zarrillo seconded the motion. The Board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.**

**191 Davis Avenue** – Construct attached dwelling unit to existing building requiring zoning relief for use and setbacks. (3/18) Pct. 6

Victor Panak described the proposal and the requested relief and indicated that the Planning Department is supportive.

Bob Allen (attorney) introduced the team and provided a brief overview of the project.

Lee Silverstone (architect) provided the Board with a presentation of the project plans.

Katya Potsiadlo (landscape architect) presented the landscape plan for the site and specifically called out proposed counterbalancing amenities.

Mr. Heikin felt that this project is very well done and is supportive.

Mr. Carr also felt that the project is good but was wondering why the covered walkway is included. Mr. Allen explained that the walkway is required for zoning purposes.

Mr. Oudens also felt that the project was great. Mr. Zarrillo agreed.

**Mr. Heikin moved to recommend approval of the site plan by Everett M. Brooks Co., dated 10/27/20, and architectural plans by SB Architects, dated 12/14/20, subject to the following conditions:**

- 1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit final floor plans and elevations, stamped and signed by a registered architect, and a final site plan, stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor, to the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning for review and approval.**
- 2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit a landscape plan and fencing plan that shows proposed counterbalancing amenities subject to approval by the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning. The counterbalancing amenities must be executed in accordance with the approved plan.**
- 3. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall electronically submit to the Building Commissioner for review and approval a) the site plan, floor plans, and elevations displaying the approval stamp of the Assistant Director for Regulatory Planning; and b) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been obtained from the Town Clerk's office by the applicant or their representative and recorded at the Registry of Deeds.**

**Mr. Oudens seconded the motion. The Board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.**

**58 University Road** – Add a fourth parking space requiring zoning relief for setbacks. (3/18) Pct. 12

Victor Panak described the proposal and the requested relief and indicated that the Planning Department is supportive.

Scott Gladstone (attorney) briefly introduced the project and reviewed the proposed site plan. Mr. Gladstone asked that relief be granted under Section 6.04.12 instead of Section 5.43.

Mr. Hines expressed his opposition to the project, especially as it suggested a second curb cut and the removal of a significant street tree.

Mr. Zarrillo said that the street tree does not look to be in good health and that the Tree Warden may approve its removal provided an adequate replacement is planted.

The Board continued to discuss the merits of the proposal. Mr. Hines emphasized a precedent case on Walnut Street that the Board did not recommend approval on.

Mr. Gladstone asked whether the Board would consider recommending approval if the plans were revised to provide more detail on the site improvements and if the applicant consulted with the tree warden. The Board provided mixed feedback.

**The case was continued.**

**3) APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED PLANS**

**Mr. Heikin moved to approve the ANR plan for 163 Dean Road. Mr. Zarrillo seconded the motion. The Board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.**

**4) APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Mr. Heikin moved to approve the minutes for 2-5-2021, 2-25-2021, and 3-3-2021. Mr. Hines seconded the motion. The Board voted 4-0-1 to approve the motion.**

**The meeting was adjourned.**