



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

PLANNING BOARD
Steve Heikin, Chairman
Robert Cook, Clerk
James Carr
Linda K. Hamlin
Blair Hines
Matthew Oudens
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BROOKLINE PLANNING BOARD MINUTES **Room 111, Brookline Town Hall** **April 11, 2019 – 7:30 p.m.**

Board Present: Steve Heikin, Bob Cook, Mark Zarrillo, James Carr, Matt Oudens, Blair Hines

Staff Present: Karen Martin, Alison Steinfeld

Mr. Heikin called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

BOARD OF APPEALS CASES **15 Cumberland Avenue – construct rear addition**

Karen Martin presented the case and the zoning relief required.

Attorney Shayna Duff introduced the project.

Aaron Weinert, architect, presented the architectural plans.

Numerous neighbors spoke in favor of the application including the direct abutter at 46 Glen Road who stated that the house is very small and is in need of an addition.

Mr. Heikin stated that the project is well thought-out and a reasonable approval. He asked about their intended landscaping plans.

Voted (6-0): THEREFORE, the Planning Board recommends approval of the site plan dated 7/27/2018 by Jason Ellis and the floor plans and elevations dated 2/21/2019 by Studio DRAW, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall submit a final site plan, floor plans and elevations, 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 landscaping plan indicating counterbalancing amenities, subject to the review and approval of the Assistant Director of Regulatory Planning.
3. 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: a) a final site plan stamped and signed by a registered engineer or land surveyor; b) final floor plans and building elevations; and c) evidence that the Board of Appeals decision has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

DISCUSSION ON PLANNING BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Planning Board held a public hearing to discuss processes and procedures and strategies for improving Planning Department procedures relating to applications, submission deadlines, public notifications, etc.

Residents **Walker Christie, Jonathan Davis** and **Carlos Ridruejo** were present and offered suggestions for improving the timeliness of notification to abutters and also improving the checklist of required items applicants must submit. The Board discussed stricter specifications for a checklist to ensure clearer and more thorough plans such as existing and proposed conditions, a scale, etc. The requirement for a PDF presentation at Planning Board meetings was also discussed.

The Board also discussed setting a hard deadline for submission of materials for a zoning application and allowing the Planning Board the discretion to either allow or not allow any materials submitted past the deadline to be reviewed by the Board. The Board discussed a deadline of perhaps 24 or 48 hours or also as early as 2 weeks. The Board agreed to continue reviewing these options.

Following the meeting, James Carr made the following outline as a summary of the discussion that took place:

- A. Establish a firm deadline before meetings by which *final* plans should be submitted.
 - a. Scheduling impacts must be considered, ZBA “hearings” required three weeks notice and agenda can’t be changed at last minute.
 - b. No such notice is required for Planning Board “meetings”.
 - c. Two key issues relative to schedule:
 - i. Adequate time for Public review of plans.
 - ii. Time for Staff review and preparation of Reports.
 - d. Planning Boards in some communities have firm submittal deadlines even up to two weeks prior which allow Public ample time to review and prepare responses.
 - e. Important to balance Public’s interest with Proponents’ desire to make improvements and clarifications without delays.

- f. Possibly have process split into a 2-meeting review/approval process. This could be onerous and cumbersome.
- g. Department/Board should establish a firm deadline, after which only minor clarifications may be added.
- h. Deadlines discussed from 48 hours prior up to 2 weeks prior.
- B. More standardization of applicants' proposals through the use of pre-submittal checklists.
 - a. A checklist is currently in use by the Planning Department.
 - i. Current checklist has "types" of documents required, but not specific information required.
 - ii. Karen Martin to distribute current checklist to Board for review and comment.
 - iii. Board would be able to provide input on specific information requirements such as the following:
 - 1. Existing v. proposed site plans
 - 2. Clear dimensions on plans
 - 3. Zoning dimensional requirements on plans
 - 4. Existing v. proposed elevations
- C. Online document submittal to improve public access to plans.
 - a. Using Acela (or an alternate system.)
 - b. Currently used for building department submittals.
 - c. Not yet for Planning Department.
- D. Use of website to improve process and public access to designs.
 - a. Possibly switch from paper to web-based review packets.
 - b. Reduce from the 16 paper copies of plans currently required.
 - c. PDF or PPT copy should be req'd for projection on screen.
- E. Possibly implement a score-sheets for review of projects based on the Purpose and Intent of Zoning By-Laws.
- F. Yearly training for Board and Staff on legal framework and applicability of ByLaws.
- G. Recommended (not required) time limits on speakers (2 minutes?)
- H. Already adopted improvements:
 - a. Point-by-point narratives in response to Community Design Standards of By-Laws in cases where design review applies.
 - b. Current submittal and review procedure has been formalized (Karen Martin to share with Board for background and for review and comment.)

Following the above discussion, Mr Carr mentioned a list of five Planning Board initiatives he has been developing and noted that the discussion outlined above happened to coincide with and much further develop one of the items which is to improve efficiency and effectiveness of Planning Board processes.

Planning Department staff suggested that they could provide a copy of the zoning application/checklist as well as a flow chart of the application process to further help the Board get a sense of current procedures. This will help inform further future discussion.

Minutes of 3/21 were approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Materials Reviewed During Meeting: Staff Reports, Zoning Texts, Site Plans, Elevations

The meeting was adjourned.