

Westwood Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
July 15, 2014
Westwood Public Library – 660 High Street
7:30 PM

Attendance & Call to Order:

Ch. Rafsky called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. WestCat TV was present and granted permission to videotape the meeting.

Present: Planning Board members, Steve Olanoff, Jack Wiggin, Bruce Montgomery and Chris Pfaff. Also present, Town Planner Nora Loughnane and Planning & Land Use Specialist Janice Barba, who recorded the minutes.

Continuation of Public Hearing for Consideration of a Special Permit for Outdoor Seating and Environmental Impact and Design Review (EIDR) Approval, and/or FMUOD Special Permit and/or Special Permit for Reduction of Parking requirements for Chiara Bistro 569 High Street

Summary & Presentation:

Highlights of Presentation:

- At the last meeting of the Planning Board it considered a request for a Special Permit for a reduction in the number of required parking spaces, as the addition of outdoor seating will take up/remove three parking spaces. The Applicant was asked to determine that additional parking spaces could be created on the property if needed at some point in the future.
- The Applicant submitted a letter from his architect confirming that four parking spaces could be created following the removal of a berm surrounding a large tree at the rear of the parcel; and provided a letter from the property owner granting permission for the removal of the berm and construction of four additional parking spaces if needed.

Board Discussion:

- A Board member asked if any interior seating will need to be removed to allow for access to the door to the outside. (Mr. Lacount said that the table and chairs currently located where the door will be added will be moved.) The Applicant will also be required to rope off fourteen interior seats when the outdoor seating area is being used.
- A Board member commented that the additional new parking spaces will not be created unless the Planning Board determines them to be needed and that would require a separate EIDR application. (Ms. Loughnane confirmed this statement.)

Public Comments:

None.

Motion/Action Taken:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Olanoff, the board voted unanimously in favor to approve the Special Permit for Outdoor Seating and to Approve the Special Permit for Reduction of the Required Minimum Number of Parking Spaces, with conditions as discussed for Chiara Bistro.

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Olanoff, the board voted unanimously in favor to continue this hearing until Tuesday, August 5th at 7:30 p.m., in the Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street. (This hearing was kept open as the Applicant is scheduled to appear before the Board of Selectmen and leave flexibility for making changes as necessary.)

Presentation of Public Safety Task Force Findings on Potential Fire and Police Facility Sites

Summary:

Tim Bonfatti consultant for the Public Safety Task Force was before the Board to update it on the status of the study.

- Two main drivers of this study: (1) University Station development and its impact on public safety, and (2) the outdated condition and size of the Islington Fire Station.

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- Discussed the possibility of building a new, combined police and fire public safety station in Islington and renovation/modernization of the existing police station on High Street.
- Also discussed building a new police station behind the existing station and renovating the High Street Fire Station.
- Islington Station is the first priority and it may need to be relocated temporarily, following this, the police station and last the main fire station.
- The Public Safety Task Force is scheduled to meet on 8/14/14 to provide a status update on: understanding of the preferred option for each facility; understanding of preliminary budget numbers; project phasing and financing plan; presentation material for the BoS and an agreement on public outreach strategy for this fall prior to Town Meeting.

Board & Town Planner's Discussion:

- Ch. Rafsky thanked Mr. Bonfatti for this presentation and commended him and the Task Force for the efforts so far.

Public Comments:

None.

Motion/Action Taken:

None needed.

Request for Modification of Covenant for 600 Clapboardtree Street to allow for issuance of Building Permit without Surety for Roadway and Utility Improvements

Summary:

Ms. Loughnane explained to the Board that Ed Musto, a prospective purchaser of the new house lot created by the subdivision of 600 Clapboardtree Street, was present to request that the Planning Board approve a modified covenant that would allow for a building permit to be issued prior to the construction of the required roadway and utility improvements without any form of surety to ensure that such improvements are completed in an acceptable manner.

Mr. Musto was present and asked the Board to reduce the amount of surety required and so as to release the issuance of the building permit but ask the building commissioner to withhold the occupancy permit until the roadway and utility improvements are done.

Board & Town Planner's Discussion:

- Ms. Loughnane said that it is her belief that the Planning Board does not have the authority under the Subdivision Control Law to modify the covenant as requested by Mr. Musto. She said that she has sought an opinion of Town Counsel McCusker and she will forward his advice to Board members upon receipt.
- Surety can be accepted in whatever value the Board thinks is appropriate.
- Is the request acceptable to the Building Commissioner? (Ms. Loughnane will check with him.)
- Comment - everyone is missing the point of what the purpose of the surety is.
- Comment - this subdivision is for only one house and not multiple houses and is inclined to agree with the proposal to withhold a final occupancy permit until improvement have been completed to the satisfaction of the Engineering department.
- Comment – a reduced surety amount would be acceptable but not as low as 10% of the estimated cost of the proposed work.

Public Comments:

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None.

Motion/Action Taken:

Additional information will be sought before the Board can make a determination on the amount required for the surety, including getting a determination from the Building Commissioner and the opinion of Town Counsel.

Continuation of Public Hearing to Consider Application by CRP, Development LLC for Proposed Senior Residential Development – Four Seasons Village at Harlequin Stables – 215 High Street

Introduction:

Applicant's Attorney Michael Terry informed that the Board that the purpose of tonight's meeting is for Mr. Rappaport to discuss the latest draft plan revisions based on feedback received during a recent meeting with Town Planner Ms. Loughnane.

Highlights of Presentation by Jerry Rappaport, CRP Development LLC

- Reported that last month's work included: evaluating what to build as-of-right, how many units could be built on site without asking for a waiver of the maximum 500' length roadway; how to provide a means of secondary, emergency egress; further reduction in density; traffic analysis to further understand driving habits of those over 55, and to collect driving and employment data for this group of individuals at similar senior residential developments in local communities; and to examine the impacts of the proximity of Route 128 and the project site as a determinant on employment and driving habits.
- Traffic engineer concluded that driving conditions around the site are significantly safer than other many other areas of District 6. Based on the traffic report, six cars per peak traffic hour will not impact traffic or safety concerns. Studies have shown that one if not both residents are retired and do generate traffic impacts.
- Introduced two plans: first, four houses with a 500' road off High Street; and a second plan showing a 30 unit building and 15 townhomes with 45 units with the 500' road. The Planning Board has expressed loudly and clearly that the density remains too high and that a secondary means of egress is necessary.

Board & Town Planner's Discussion:

- Can the secondary access be built within the 30' buffer? (It must be constructed outside of the perimeter buffer or a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals would be required.)
- Would the emergency access need to be a paved surface? (This would be up to the Planning Board's discretion.)
- How many units in the flat building? (42)
- How does this fit into the appropriateness of the neighborhood?
- Traffic safety is the utmost concern.
- The next time that this project will be discussed is in September. What can be done in the month of August so as to be productive? (Which concept plan does the Board want to be reviewed by the Peer Review Consultant?)
- Can the emergency access be tied into the driveways so as to avoid the 30' buffer?
- What does the public think of the proposed, large apartment building in the back?
- The emergency access does not need to be the entire length of the road.
- Ch. Rafsky asked the public to comment on which plan is preferred and stated that it is important to give the developer direction on the way to proceed.
- Ch. Rafsky reminded the public that every applicant has a right to due process.
- The purpose of coming back on August 5th is to for the Board members to share their thoughts on the plans in a public meeting and assured the residents that no decisions on this project will be made at that meeting or in the near future.

Public Comments:

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S. Hayes, Longwood Drive – commented that he is distressed with the multi-family plans and feels this is not appropriate development of this area; doesn't want townhouses built here.

L. Legere, Westwood Citizens for Zoning Integrity – stated that this hearing feels like a pre-application meeting as opposed to the fourth public hearing. His clients consider the apartment style building to be far too dense for the neighborhood. These plans are inappropriate and out of scale.

D. Dewolfe, 206 Grove Street – this is an inappropriate site and this is inappropriate use. Less than 20-25% of the residents who occupy the townhomes will not be Westwood residents. He is opposed.

K. Sharifzadeh, 246 Grove Street – expressed concern and is strongly opposed.

M. Soule, 235 High Street – commented that she thinks this project is inappropriate for this location. Expressed her frustration and said that waiting until August for another meeting is crazy.

J. Tierney, 232 Grove Street – asked Ch. Rafsky to assure the public that the project will not be approved at the August meeting.

Motion/Action Taken:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Olanoff, the board voted unanimously in favor to continue this hearing until Tuesday, August 5th at 7:30 p.m. in the Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street.

Pre-application Meeting with Potential Applicant for Senior Residential Development at 615 High Street

Purpose:

- Following the first pre-application conference with the board on June 10th, Patrick Geraghty developed a revised concept plan for a Senior Residential Development at 615 High Street, and filed an incomplete application for special permit review.
- This revised concept plan, like the original concept plan, shows a high density configuration of multiple unit townhouses along one side of a long straight access drive. Mr. Geraghty asked to meet again with the Planning Board before further developing the plans to the extent necessary to receive a determination of completeness and to allow for the scheduling of a public hearing.

Presentation:

Developer Patrick Geraghty and his engineer Edmond Spruhan were before the board to present the plans. Highlights of the proposed plans: *(Copies of these plans are available with these minutes.)*

- Convert existing dwelling at 615 High Street into a two-family
- Existing driveway would take a sharp right behind the existing dwelling and turn left into a site drive serving the housing units, ending with a cul-de-sac right before the 100' wetlands buffer.
- 3 townhouse dwellings, 3 groups of four townhouses for a total of 17 units.
- Would the board consider waiving the requirement for a secondary means of access?
- Discussed placing site drive to the opposite side of the project but there is a significant slope on that area of the lot.

Board & Town Planner's Discussion:

- Board members would prefer a site drive that is more curved and no longer than 500' due to public safety regulations.
- Board members agreed that they would like the existing house to remain, renovated in a similar character to what exists now.
- Comment - The building design should mimic the housing in the neighborhood.
- Requested that the applicant submit a plan sheet with the proposed plans superimposed on top of the existing area so as to clearly represent the density.

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- Although the minimum/maximum distance between housing units is not specified by the regulations, the massing and topography should be considered in the determination of the spacing.
- Comment - there are too many units proposed to achieve the character preferred in SRD, including dedicated open space.

Public Comments:

None.

Motion/Action Taken:

None needed.

The Applicant stated that he would like to submit another revised concept plan based on feedback received from the Planning Board tonight for review by the town planner.

Continuation of Public Hearing regarding the revision of various sets of existing Planning Board rules, regulations, standards and guidelines, and the adoption of new sets of rules, regulations, standards and guidelines.

Board & Town Planner's Discussion:

No additional revisions have been received.

Public Comments:

None.

Motion/Action Taken:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Pfaff, the board voted unanimously in favor to continue this hearing until Tuesday, October 14th at 7:30 p.m., in the Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ms. Loughnane asked the board if it would like to take up a demolition delay bylaw at the fall Town Meeting or at the Annual Town Meeting.
- Ms. Loughnane suggested proposing housekeeping amendments for the Fall Town Meeting and other zoning amendments with a greater public interest addressed at the May town meeting. That being said, Ms. Loughnane believes that there is a good reason to put the demolition delay bylaw on the fall warrant. Board members agreed with her.

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Wiggin, the board voted unanimously in favor to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:25 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 5th @ 7:30 p.m., in Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street.

List of Documents:

Concept Plans 215 High Street	PDF
Concept Plans 615 High Street	PDF