

Westwood Planning Board
Meeting Minutes
December 2, 2014
50 Carby Street
7:30 PM

Attendance & Call to Order:

Ch. Rafsky called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. WestCat TV entered the meeting 15 minutes late and was granted permission to videotape the meeting.

Present: Board members: Steve Rafsky, 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 to Consider Application by CRP Development, LLC for Proposed Senior Residential Development – Four Seasons Village at Harlequin Stables – 215 High Street

Ch. Rafsky welcomed the Proponents: Jerry Rappaport, Matt Zuker and Attorney Mike Terry.

Introductory Comments – Matt Zuker

- Stated that this has not been an easy process; it has been time consuming, frustrating, educational, humbling and beneficial.
- Stated that it is apparent that there are underlying issues with the SRD Bylaw.
- Stated that all agree that there is a need for an appropriate senior residential development, with an appropriate project and location. He acknowledged that many do not agree that this (location) as an appropriate place. He said that this project is close to main roads, downtown and to the highway which makes it an appropriate location for some kind of SRD.
- Stated that he has received great feedback from the Planning Board, town staff and other town departments and he believes that this proposal being presented right now is the best one possible.
- Stated that he has received Beta's peer review report and that his project engineers have received and read the report and will be working on suggested revisions over the next month. He said that his project engineers are confident that they can address all of the concerns in the report.
- Stated that upon meeting those concerns, he is confident that the plan meets the seven criteria and the purposes of the SRD bylaw.
- He thanked the Planning Board and the members of the public for their patience with the process.

Brief Presentation of Latest Plans - Jerry Rappaport

- Proposing three structures designed to resemble country villas/estates, two containing eight units and one containing ten units and the community facilities. Each unit will have a two-car garage.
- Density has been reduced from 83 units to 26 units – 3 units per acre (previously 4-5 units per acre).
- Height has been reduced to two stories for each of the two front buildings (from three) and villas moved 60-100 feet back from the property lines to provide maximum buffers.
- Have created improved emergency vehicle access by providing two means of egress.
- Have surveyed the area and have found that the project's proposed buildings which include approximately 20,000 sq. ft. will fit in with abutting buildings that are also 20,000 sq. ft.
- Presented created simulated renderings of views of the buildings from different angles – from the front, driveway, the back, etc. and said that more information will be provided later.
- Stated that the new traffic study indicates “no impacts on traffic operations” (Four vehicles per hour enter Rte. 109/High St.) (He added that they will provide additional information on this as requested by Beta.)
- Plans have been updated to delete dens and bedrooms layouts have been spread out, etc.
- Project will provide a strong sense of community with shared indoor and outdoor community spaces and activities such as a fitness center and gathering spaces.
- Exterior recreational areas include fire pit, barbeque area, walking trails, bike paths, bike racks, etc.
- Reiterated that his project engineers have received Beta's peer review report and will respond to it over the next month.
- He said that he is looking forward to the Planning Board's site visit.

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Abbreviated Summary of BETA Review Comments – Phil Paradis

- Substantial changes have been submitted since the last peer review in June.
- Planning Board should consider the heights of the buildings.
- Planning Board should discuss whether it is amenable to the proposed building type and density (3.9 units per acre)
- Provide AutoTURN plan showing adequate access for emergency and delivery vehicles.
- Additional work must be done on Stormwater Management and erosion control in accordance with MA Stormwater Management Standards; detailed landscape and planting plans; lighting plans; and environmental impact statement; earth material movement plan; show walkways in all plans; provide typical sections for roadway, drives and paths, protection of pedestrians, etc. (A copy of the full peer review report is included with these minutes.)

Board & Town Planner Discussion

- Ch. Rafsky said more engineering and further review is needed and that this hearing will be short tonight.
- A board member asked Mr. Paradis about the status of the sewer connection and previous mention of a private tie-in and whether this has been addressed. (Mr. Paradis said that the proposed sewer will be directly connected to a main on High Street.)
- A board member requested details about pedestrian access, sidewalks, crosswalks and curbing. Expressed concern about main entrance driveway. Is concerned that there may not be enough room for a car to pull up to the front door and allow another car to pass it. In addition, he commented that he is not sure that the visitor parking is adequate; that the visitor parking is undesirable as it relates to pedestrian safety and suggested relocating the sidewalk.
- A question was asked about why no drainage is shown on the plans at the back of one of the buildings and expressed concern that stormwater would spill out into the street.
- A board member asked if the secondary access has been reviewed and approved by the fire department. (Mr. Paradis said he will review the autoTURN diagrams upon receipt with the fire department staff.)
- A board member said that an important decision criterion for the Special Permit that remains to be considered is whether the Board thinks that this project is the right type, size and density for this neighborhood. He asked if the proponent's original analysis documents will be revised to identify who this project is being marketed to, the unit price points, what needs are being met, the social and lifestyle services, etc. He also asked the proponent for its expectations related to affordable housing provisions. (Mr. Rappaport responded that CRP, LLC intends to make a contribution to the Westwood Housing Authority as opposed to including affordable units in this project.)
- A board member asked the proponent to describe the square footage of the buildings and units. (Mr. Rappaport said that the units range from 1600 – 2000 sq. ft. depending on the side of the building, floor, etc.; there are two garages per unit with bike storage; central lobby will provide the community facilities, storage, library, media center, fitness center. The gross square footage of each building is between 20,000 and 24,000 sq. ft.)
- A board member asked the proponent to identify the properties in the abutting neighborhood that are approximately 20,000 sq. ft. He added that in his observations he noted that one of the larger abutting homes was probably about 12,000 sq. ft., some were 6-8,000 sq. ft. and some were less than that. (Mr. Rappaport and Attorney Mike Terry said that square footage was taken from assessor's information and the square footage was combined for all buildings such as garages, pool cabanas and other out-buildings on the properties.)
- Ch. Rafsky asked Mr. Paradis opinion about why left hand turns are prohibited onto High Street anywhere before Summer Street. Does the proximity of High Street to Route 128 have anything to do with this? Is it safe to allow a left-hand turn out of this project? If left turns out of this project are disallowed, what burden does this place on the applicant? Ch. Rafsky added that there is subjectivity to the seven points related to the decision of the Planning Board for this project. He said

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that he is still struggling with whether these are the right sized buildings, right number of units and how they impacts the environment. He said that he is still struggling with the square footage, although he does believe a lot of progress has been made. He said that after receiving revised, completed engineering reports he believes things will become clear.

Public Comments:

S. Hayes, 10 Longwood Drive – He said that he has been disillusioned by this process; it is clear to him that this is not an appropriate place for a multi-family project.

Unidentified resident – Asked if the town is going to conduct its own traffic study.

L. Legere, Attorney for Westwood Citizens for Zoning Integrity (WCZI) – commented on the density of the project and his belief that it is still far too high based on underlying zoning. Stated that open space is valued in this part of town and is concerned about the precedent being set for the other surrounding properties.

R. DeWolfe, Grove St. – Commented that the sewer connection is privately owned by five families who must cast a majority vote on further connections. He added that the neighbors have not been contacted for their input.

K. Goldman, 129 Summer St. – Asked why a full set of working plans have not been submitted. (Ch. Rafsky said that the plans have been substantially changed and he expects that at the next meeting – fully engineered plans will be presented.)

J. Tierney, 232 Grove St. – stated that the board should question the validity of the traffic study. He suggested that addresses are provided of the 20,000 sq. ft. houses in the neighborhood.

J. Thorndike, 229 High St. - submitted visual evidence (a map) showing the project parcel and surrounding properties and ratio of buildings to total acreage per lot.

K. Sharifzadeh, 246 Grove St. – Asked how long this process is going to take. (Ch. Rafsky said that the Board will not meet again until fully engineered plans with responses to peer review comments have been submitted.)

M. Washienko, 226 Dover Rd. – expressed concerns about an outsider coming here and gaining financially in Westwood; had miscellaneous comments in opposition to the project.

Motion/Action Taken:

Action: Town Planner Ms. Loughnane suggested that the Board schedule a visit to the site to observe the project staked out and to view a “balloon test” to illustrate the proposed height of buildings to the surrounding neighborhood. *The site visit was scheduled for Friday, December 19th at 8:30 a.m.*

Motion:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Olanoff, the board voted unanimously in favor to continue this hearing until Tuesday, February 10th at 7:30 p.m. in the Champagne Meeting Room, 50 Carby Street.

Pre-Application Conference for Proposed New Fire Station 2 – 300 Washington Street

Ch. Rafsky welcomed Selectman Nancy Hyde to the meeting. Ms. Hyde thanked the Planning Board for its support for the project so far. She stated that the Task Force is interested in the Planning Board's feedback on design and sustainability of the proposal.

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Summary of Presentation – Don Walter from Dore & Whittier Architects & Mark Gabrielle from Parr Corp.:

- Gave a brief history new fire station proposal
- Identified challenges associated with the site – existing underground and surface utilities that cannot be relocated due to the high cost to do so; an existing light pole on the softball field and a significant grade change.
- Three apparatus bays are located in front, small vehicle (chief's car and ambulance) drive around back; parking on the side; main public access on the left hand side of the building. A pedestrian path from the Little League field to the softball field is planned.
- There is an expansive, existing concrete apron of pavement that is needed for fire apparatus turning movements.
- The topography of the parking lot will be raised 5' to 6'. Items to be addressed include stormwater attenuation working with existing purple utility vaults; examination of existing cross walk locations; sewer tie in front on Washington St.; and co-location of generator, trash, transformer and condenser at grade with building.
- Existing site floor plans were presented highlighting the use of certain imagery, reflective of Westwood's historic tradition and to set the tone for future design of the town square. Showed examples of other New England Fire stations – using materials such as clapboards and brick; a tower – bell or clock-face (3 sided) showed different options. Goal is to blend tradition but look forward to the future downtown Islington.

Board & Town Planner Discussion:

- A board member asked what the proposed building materials will be and commented that he likes this new plan. (Proponent said that the building may be brick or clapboards or have a mixture of both elements.
- A board member asked which building material, brick or clapboards is more expensive to build or which is more expensive to maintain?
- A board member suggested that he likes the idea of brick on first level and clapboards on the second.
- A board member asked why the building is not facing straight on either East St. or on Washington St. (Proponent said that the orientation of the building must remain diagonal due to fire apparatus turning radius requirements.)
- A board member asked if there is an existing well behind the building. (Mr. Korchin said that there is an existing well that is for softball field irrigation only and will not be disturbed.)
- A board member asked to see an elevation to show East St. He commented that the Little League snack shack needs to work with them.
- A board member requested that visual interest be considered when designing the side elevation.
- A board member requested information about pedestrian crossing details such as sidewalks, walk / don't walk signs, etc. (The proponent said that these details will be addressed in the traffic study and will seek the advice of the police and fire departments.)
- A board member asked if the fire department currently employs any women firefighters. (Not at the moment but possible in the future and therefore there will be additional unisex facilities for this accommodation.)
- A board member asked if the tower feature on the building houses the stairwell. (Yes.)
- A board member asked about the roof design and what equipment needs to be accommodated up there. He suggested something other than the planned hip-roof style in keeping with the other types of roofs in the neighborhood.
- Ms. Loughnane reminded board members that the maximum building height in FMUOD is 36'; and asked if the board would consider waiving this.
- A board member commented that the height makes a stronger visual statement and questioned bringing the roof-line brought down.

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- A board member commented on the importance of integrating LEED design in public building projects. (Stretch code is the baseline but a cost-benefit analysis needs will be done.)
- A board member Chief Scoble if he is satisfied with the proposal. (Chief – yes.) Pleased with the progress.)
- Ch. Rafsky and other board members applauded the Public Safety Task Force on its efforts thus far.

Public Comments:

None

Motion/Action Taken:

None needed.

Next steps:

- The architects will return before the Planning Board for a Pre-Application Conference on December 16th with a revised concept plan reflecting responses to comments from this meeting.
- If the revised concept plan is acceptable, the team will proceed with the preparation of an EIDR application for consideration in February.

Consideration of Modification to EIDR Approval for Proposed DPW Equipment Shed at Municipal Facility - 50 Carby Street

Town Planner's Summary

- The Planning Board granted EIDR Approval for the proposed DPW Equipment Shed sprung structure at the November 10th meeting. The board conditioned this approval on a requirement that the cladding material for the sprung structure be either green or tan. A sample of the proposed tan color has since been submitted. This sample appears to be far more yellow than indicated at the hearing.
- DPW Director Todd Korchin is present to request that the board consider a modification to the EIDR Approval to allow for the use of white cladding material to match the other buildings on-site.
- Ms. Loughnane explained that she called the three abutters who commented at the original public hearing and left messages on their phones notifying them about tonight's meeting. She explained that he closest abutter was concerned with proposed lighting (none except on building above doorways); another abutter expressed a dislike for the color white and the other neighbor questioned the need for the structure.

Board Questions & Comments:

- There was a brief exchange of questions and comments.

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 request for Minor Modification to the EIDR Approval for DPW Equipment Shed at 50 Carby Street.

Consideration of Request for 8th One-Year Extension of Shared Driveway Special Permit for 480 Summer Street – Michael and Yvette Mouhanna

Town Planner's Summary:

- A letter was delivered from Michael and Yvette Mouhanna requesting an eighth extension of the Shared Driveway Special Permit for 480 Summer Street.

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- With the Extension Act, the special permit will remain valid through December 1, 2016, although, since the property is currently being marketed for sale, and several potential buyers have expressed interest in developing one or both of the proposed new house lots, and at least one potential buyer has expressed interest in reconfiguring the lots.

Board & Town Planner Discussion

- Board members agreed with Ms. Loughnane's recommendation to grant this requested one-year extension merely for the sake of clarity.

Public Comments:

None

Motion/Action Taken:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Wiggin, the board voted unanimously in favor to grant approval of a one-year extension of the Shared Driveway Permit for 480 Summer Street.

Discussion Regarding Exterior Lighting at Colburn School Building

Board & Town Planner Discussion

- Ms. Loughnane reported that as part of the Colburn School Decision, one of the parking lot light fixtures behind the building was permitted to lit all night with the condition that the Planning Board could reassess the need for this light to remain on if it proved to be a disturbance to abutting property owners.
- The tall light fixture has proven to be a disturbance to the immediate residential abutter. As a result, Coffman Realty agreed to replace this fixture with a shorter ornamental light fixture. That fixture has been on back order for several months and Coffman has now turned off the tall light fixture to prevent further light spillage onto the abutting property while awaiting delivery of the ornamental light fixture.
- Ms. Loughnane said that she has inspected the area in the evening with this tall light fixture turned off and there appears to be sufficient light without this fixture to allow residents to move safely from their cars to the apartments and vice versa.
- Ms. Loughnane said that the Planning Board may want to consider whether or not to require that all parking lot fixtures be turned off within one hour of the closing time of the Library or Bank, whichever is later.
- Board members agreed with the recommendation made by Ms. Loughnane. Some board members said that they would visit the site at night to see the current conditions.

Public Comments:

None

Motion/Action Taken:

None needed.

New Business – Reserved for topics not reasonably anticipated to be discussed

None

Adjournment:

Upon a motion by Mr. Montgomery and seconded by Mr. Pfaff, the board voted unanimously in favor to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9:45 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, December 16th at 7:30 p.m. in the Champagne Meeting Room at 50 Carby Street

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List of Documents:

Four Seasons Village at Harlequin Stables – Proposed SRD: Cover Sheet; Existing Conditions; Layout; Grading; Utilities; Details	PDF
Four Seasons Estates at Harlequin Stables – Executive Summary/Conclusions	PDF
Letter to PB from P. Paradis of BETA Group, dated 11-24-14, RE: 215 High St - SRD Peer Review	PDF
Letter to PB from Jerry Rappaport, CRP Development, LLC, dated 12-01-14 RE: Response to BETA Review	PDF
Letter to PB from M. Mouhanna, dated 1-19-14 RE: Request for Extension	PDF