



## PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 5, 2023

### Members present:

Kelley Brown, Chair  
Kevin McCormick, Vice-Chair  
Lee Breckenridge, Member  
Amy Dain, Member  
Peter Doeringer, Member  
Jennifer Molinsky, Member  
Jyothsna Buddharaju, Alternate  
Barney Heath, *ex officio*

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

### Staff present:

Joseph Iadonisi, Planning Associate

Barney Heath  
Director

Planning & Development

Joseph Iadonisi  
Planning Associate

### Members

Kelley Brown, Chair  
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair  
Lee Breckenridge, Member  
Amy Dain, Member  
Peter Doeringer, Member  
Jennifer Molinsky, Member  
Barney Heath, *ex officio*  
Laxmi Rao, Alternate  
Jyothsna Buddharaju, Alternate

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

### 1. Recommendation on Landmark Proposal before Newton Historical Commission a. 89-93 Wyman Street

The Board recognized Mr. Doug Cornelius, Chair of the Newton Historical Commission (NHC), to speak to the process of landmarking the proposed property and to NHC's work so far in considering the property. Mr. Cornelius informed the Board that the property is not currently on the National Register, so NHC did not make a determination that the property was historically significant and should proceed to the landmark vote. The Planning and Development Board's role in the Landmark Ordinance is to advise NHC on how the proposed site fits into the City's policies and plans and the impact on the surrounding area and any other relevant planning considerations at any time prior to the public hearing.

Members of the Board then further discussed with Mr. Cornelius how to deliver a recommendation that fits within that scope.

Mr. Cornelius spoke to the history of the site, which has been significantly renovated over the years, making the determination more complicated.

Mr. Doeringer asked Mr. Cornelius to clarify that the interior building built in 1890, Waban Hall, and the exterior addition added in 1923, which includes the Starbucks, would be separate designations.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Cornelius discussed the historic value of those buildings. Mr. Cornelius mentioned that possible scope of what is landmarked could also be limited to particular portions of buildings.

Mr. McCormick discussed the site's proposed Village Center 2 overlay and its potential to provide more housing immediately by transit and a village center.

Ms. Buddharaju asked about the impact of the potential landmark designation on what sort of renovations or additions could occur in line with the proposed overlay. Mr. Heath and Mr. Brown discussed that it is unclear.

Councilor Crossley, Chair of the Zoning and Planning Committee, joined the meeting to clarify that she was on the initial memorandum proposing landmarking the site by

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mistake, having meant to support the landmarking of the adjacent Strong Block. Ms. Getz, President of the Waban Area Council, referred the Board to the landmark report.

Mr. Brown asked the Board to consider whether to make a recommendation to NHC and what type of recommendation. Mr. McCormick recommended against landmarking, due to the importance of the site as a part of the Village Center Overlay District.

Mr. Doeringer asked for more input from the NHC as to why the NHC accepted the landmark nomination and Mr. Cornelius said that the original interior building's development alongside the Strong Block was significant.

Ms. Molinsky offered potential language for the Board's recommendation: "it is not the Planning and Development Board's purview to comment on the historic merit of this property and we defer to the Historic Commission for that, but our advice is to take into account that the site, which is a large site, is under consideration for an overlay zoning of Village Center 2. Landmarking this site would make the development of multifamily and/or mixed-use housing more difficult, therefore the Planning and Development Board recommends strongly considering these factors before landmarking the site." Mr. Doeringer seconded Ms. Molinsky's proposal. Members of the Board discussed the language of the proposed recommendation and how to ensure that the Board's recommendation fit within the Landmark Ordinance. Based on that discussion, Ms. Molinsky proposed a motion to recommend the following: "based on the merits of the planning considerations alone, we take into account that the site is under active consideration for inclusion in the Village Center 2 district as part of the Village Center Overlay District and that the Planning and Development Board would recommend not landmarking on the basis of that potential forthcoming change." Ms. Molinsky added that the Board could include something about the effect on the neighborhood of landmarking or not landmarking, which would make redevelopment more challenging on the site in the future. Mr. Brown considered this a motion and asked for a second, which Mr. McCormick seconded. With six votes for and one abstention (Director Heath), the motion passed.

## **2. Village Center Zoning Version 2.0/ MBTA Communities Law Compliance Discussion**

Mr. Heath provided the Board with an update on the proposed Village Center Overlay District with the next Zoning and Planning Committee meeting scheduled for June 12th, a presentation before the Council of the Whole scheduled for June 20 and a Public Hearing on June 26th. At the next Zoning and Planning Committee, the Planning Department planned to focus on the Multi-Residence Transit zone and how the proposed zoning could compete economically with the underlying zoning which mostly produces large single family and two-family houses. Mr. Heath and Mr. Iadonisi reported that at the most recent Zoning and Planning Committee, the Planning Department presented its sensitivity analysis on parking requirements which demonstrated that even requiring 0.5 spaces per unit would bring the Village Center Overlay District out of compliance with the MBTA Communities law.

## **3. Minutes**

The April 3 minutes were approved by a 7-0 vote upon a motion to amend and approve by Mr. Doeringer

The April 24th minutes were approved with a 7-0 vote upon a motion to approve as amended from Mr. Doeringer.

## **4. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Ms. Molinsky, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.