



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 7, 2023

Members present:

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

Staff present:

Joseph Iadonisi, Planning Associate
Mollie Hutchings, Chief Preservation Planner

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

Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

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

1. Recommendation on Landmark Proposal before Newton Historical Commission a. 2-12 Windsor Road

Chief Preservation Planner, Ms. Mollie Hutchings, briefed the Board on 2-12 Windsor Road, known as the "Strong Block." Ms. Hutchings informed the Board of the historic and architectural significance and integrity of property. Councilor Bill Humphrey, who represents Waban, voiced his support for preserving the Strong Block, but that the site still has some ability to develop without impacting the historic significance of the original structures. Board members, including Mr. Doeringer and Mr. McCormick, also voiced their support for protecting the historic and architectural significance while recognizing the importance of the area and site as potential sites for the Village Center Overlay District. Additionally, Ms. Hutchings, Mr. Brown, Mr. Doeringer, and Councilor Humphrey discussed the sequence of development and additions for the Strong Block. Ms. Dain clarified the role of the Board's recommendation with Ms. Hutchings who stated that the Board's recommendation is part of the Newton Historic Commission's decision-making process. At Ms. Dain's request, staff confirmed that the Strong Block's Beacon St. frontage requires mixed use.

Mr. Doeringer offered a motion, which Mr. Brown summarized, to support the landmarking of the Strong Block, but to provide some guidance and support for redeveloping the parking lot and 10 Windsor Road locations. The Board voted 6-0 in favor with Director Heath abstaining.

b. 19 Highland Avenue

Ms. Hutchings summarized the significance of the existing church and parish house at 19 Highland Ave. Mr. Brown asked for discussion from Board. Mr. Doeringer voiced his support for distinguishing between the original parts of the church as worthy of preservation and the addition to the parish house and parking lot as having potential for development in similar language to the 2-12 Windsor Rd. recommendation. Director Heath added that there have been parties interested in purchasing the site and a studies conducted to evaluate the feasibility for redevelopment as an arts center and for redevelopment as housing. Ms. Hutchings and Mr. Cornelius recommended the Board distinguish between the parish house and church. Ms. Hutchings recommended the church specifically be preserved in the landmarking recommendation rather than rehabilitated. Mr. McCormick proposed similar language to the recommendation on 2-12 Windsor Rd. Mr. Careaga, representing the church's ownership, spoke to the history

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of the church and the parish house. Mr. Brown solicited a motion to recommend the redevelopment of the site in a way that preserves the church, but leaves the parish house and remainder of the lot open for development. Mr. Doeringer expressed disagreement with redeveloping the parish house. Mr. Brown offered motion language to support the landmark nomination of the church property with the highest and most stringent review devoted to the church itself. Recognizing the relationship with the parish house and similar materials used, some board members felt stronger than others that the parish house was worthy of preservation. Mr. McCormick seconded the motion and the Board voted 6-0 with Director Heath abstaining while Mr. Doeringer and Ms. Breckenridge asked Mr. Brown to include language that represents their view that the building in the back deserves preservation. Ms. Dain further discussed the nature of the historic review process for the property, given its location in the Village Center Overlay District, and the ability of the City to negotiate for historic preservation and other priorities.

2. Discussion on docket item #205-23 Petition to rezone lots on Charles Street

Mr. Brown questioned staff on the minimum lot size for the rezoning request, which did not meet the minimum lot size for the requested district, but given it was a rezoning request rather than creation of a new lot, staff informed the Board that it did not apply. Ms. Breckenridge asked about the adjacent parcels, particularly 11 Riverside Dr. property, and the potential for any larger development. Mr. Iadonisi informed the board that adjacent parcels are owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and others and are unlikely to be part of a larger development. Mr. Iadonisi further detailed the rationale for the rezoning request. Ms. Breckenridge expressed hesitation at the potential impact on stormwater of future development. Mr. Doeringer expressed hesitation at setting a precedent and Director Heath spoke to the uniqueness of the lot and patchwork of zoning in the immediate area created by the Massachusetts Turnpike. Upon a motion from Mr. Brown, the Board voted 6-0 with Director Heath abstaining to recommend approval of the rezoning request.

3. Continuation of Public Hearing for docket item #38-22 Request for discussion and amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map regarding village center districts and discussion on docket item #39-22 Requesting discussion on state guidance for implementing the Housing Choice Bill

Director Heath updated the Board on the upcoming Zoning and Planning Committee agenda, which included a review of and straw votes of proposed amendments to the map and text with the goal of presenting a full ordinance and map to the City Council for a vote. Mr. Brown asked about noticing with map changes and Director Heath informed Mr. Brown that the City's noticing efforts have exceeded legal requirements. Ms. Dain questioned about how changes might affect compliance with the MBTA Communities Act, Director Heath informed Ms. Dain that staff plan to check compliance following any map amendments. Councilor Wright spoke to the Board about her and Councilor Oliver's spreadsheet, which attempts to calculate the number of units, but differs from the MBTA Communities compliance model. Mr. Doeringer voiced his support for the spreadsheet. Director Heath spoke to the plan to review how Site Plan Review fits into the Village Center Overlay District.

4. Discussion on docket item #206-23 Discussion and possible ordinance to allow breweries, brew pubs, and other craft beverage production

Director Heath and Mr. Iadonisi updated the Board on the current status of the docket item, scheduled for a September 11th Public Hearing. Mr. Iadonisi solicited discussion on the definition of the proposed use, parking requirements, and square footage allotments. Mr. Doeringer, Mr. Brown, Councilor Wright, and Mr. Iadonisi

discussed parking requirements and how planning staff arrived at the current recommended allotments relative to other uses.

5. Minutes

Upon a motion from Mr. Doeringer, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the May 1st and June 26th minutes.

6. Adjournment

Upon a motion from Ms. Breckenridge, the Board voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting.