



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

City of Newton, Massachusetts
Department of Planning and Development
1000 Commonwealth Avenue Newton, Massachusetts 02459

Telephone
(617) 796-1120
Telefax
(617) 796-1142
TDD/TTY
(617) 796-1089
www.newtonma.gov

Barney S. Heath
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 4, 2023
TO: Councilor R. Lisle Baker, Chair, Zoning & Planning Committee
Members of the Zoning & Planning Committee
FROM: Barney Heath, Director, Department of Planning and Development
Jennifer Caira, Deputy Director Department of Planning and Development
Zachery LeMel, Chief of Long Range Planning
RE: **#43-24 Quarterly update on projects using the VCOD overlay districts**
Councilors Albright and Danberg requesting updates on any potential projects brought to the Planning Department under the new Village Center Overlay District. The updates should include indications of interest and actual permits filed; for which villages and under which zoning districts; number of stories and units.
MEETING: April 8, 2023
CC: City Council
Planning Board
Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer

Quarterly Update – Village Center Overlay District (VCOD)

Per the City Council's request, Planning staff will provide updates on projects brought forward under the Village Center Overlay District (VCOD) zoning. The activity to date can be summarized as:

1. Regular communications of interest from property owners, architects, developers, lawyers, brokers, etc.
2. Planning/Inspectional Services (ISD) went live with new VCOD building permit applications on April 1st
3. One filed building permit (424 Newtonville Ave – MRT, Adaptive Reuse)
4. One Development Review Team (DRT) meeting held (19 Highland Ave – VC3)

Regular Communications

Planning staff (Current and Long Range) and ISD have spoken to interested parties on the phone, through email, and at the counter. The vast majority of these conversations have been about properties in the MRT district for new construction and adaptive reuse. Most of those seeking information are existing homeowners. Additional inquiries include VC2 parcels in Newton Highlands and Auburndale.

New VCOD Building Permit

To properly capture and review VCOD projects, which often require different submission requirements, ISD and Planning went live on April 1st with the following updated permit applications in Newton's NewGov system:

1. Updated general building permit
2. Change of tenant form
3. Certificate of inspection

In addition, this will allow for easier data capture and reporting in the future.

Filed Building Permits

To date, one project has filed for a building permit under the VCOD. 424 Newtonville Avenue is a property in the MRT zone utilizing the adaptive reuse provisions. The proposal is to convert an existing three-unit building into a four-unit building. No exterior alterations are proposed.

DRT Meetings

In March, 19 Highland Avenue (Swedenborgian church), presented an early proposal at a DRT meeting. This is a VC3 property. While the project is in the early stages, the current proposal would adaptively reuse the existing church as a residential conversion and subdivide the parcel to allow for a new VC3 mixed-use or residential building in the rear.

Next Steps

Planning staff will work to formalize a format for these quarterly reports. Until then, staff is available to meet with individual City Councilors who have specific questions.