

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2019



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Rachel Powers
CD & HOME
Program Manager
Planning & Development

Members

Peter Doeringer, Chair
Kelley Brown, Member
Sudha Maheshwari, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Sonia Parisca, Vice Chair
Chris Steele, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Kevin McCormick, Alternate
James Robertson, Alternate

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Full Members Present:

Barney Heath, Ex-Officio
Peter Doeringer, Chair
Kelley Brown, Member
Chris Steele, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Kevin McCormick, Alternate
James Robinson, Alternate

Staff Present:

Michael Gleba, Senior Planner
Lou Taverna, City Engineer
Patrick Higgins, DPW Engineer

Meeting held in Room 204, Newton City Hall

1. Approval of Minutes of September 10th and 11th

Chair Doeringer opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. Mr. Doeringer explained that the minutes from the previous meetings were not available and will be approved at the next Planning Board meeting.

2. Board of Survey

Lou Taverna, City Engineer, addressed the Board concerning amendments to the City's Approval Not Required (ANR) submissions. The Planning Board unanimously approved to enter their designation as the Board of Survey. Once convened, the Planning Board, acting as the Board of Survey, reviewed the latest draft of the ANR submission requirements prepared by Patrick Higgins of DPW (see attached). After a review with Mr. Higgins, the Planning Board, acting as the Board of Survey, unanimously approved the new language with some additional suggestions from members of the Board.

3. 15-21 Lexington Street Rezoning Request

Michael Gleba, Senior Planner, presented a rezoning request for the property located at 15-21 Lexington Street. After hearing from Mr. Gleba and determining that the petition has an official public hearing at the Land Use Committee meeting on October 10th, it was moved by Mr. Steele, seconded by Mr. McCormick, and unanimously approved 7-0 to hold the item.

4. Riverside Rezoning Discussion

Mr. Heath indicated that this item will next be reviewed by the Zoning & Planning Committee on October 16th. Mr. Heath indicated that there were two rezoning petitions, one submitted by the petitioner/owner of the property and one by the Lower Falls Improvement Association. Mr. Heath relayed that the Department's position continues to be that the zoning for the site should be flexible to allow the project to move forward to a more substantive discussion at Land Use as part of the Special Permit review. Mr. Brown expressed concern that the project being reduced in size produces a less than optimized project outcome. Ms. Molinsky expressed

concern over traffic and pedestrian improvements necessary to accommodate projects like this and Washington Street. Mr. Doeringer indicated that he liked moving the height away from Grove Street toward the interior of the site. Mr. Heath suggested that the Planning Board continue to review the staff recommendations and possibly attend the ZAP meetings devoted to this subject. Mr. Brown offered to prepare a draft letter in advance of the Planning Board's November 4th meeting. Mr. Doeringer suggest that a subcommittee of Mr. Brown, Mr. Heath, and himself work to prepare a draft in advance of the November 4th meeting.

5. Washington Street Vision Plan Update

Mr. Heath indicated that a new draft of the Washington Street Vision Plan has been prepared for consideration. This item will be discussed next at the October 16th Zoning & Planning Committee. There was discussion about the 10-story height in West Newton and the removal of the Armory reference for affordable housing. Mr. Brown recommended that the Planning Board take a position on the Vision Plan sooner rather than later to provide guidance to the City Council in advance of their vote on this item. Mr. Steele recommended that the Planning Board be prepared to vote on this item at their November 4th meeting. Mr. Doeringer expressed concern about the viability of the boulevard approach for Washington Street. Ms. Molinsky expressed concern about the transitions to the neighborhood from new development.

6. Climate Action Plan/ Climate Related Zoning

Mr. Doeringer expressed concern over the lack of cost/benefit analyses of various recommendations in the plan. Mr. Heath indicated that a public hearing will be set in November. Mr. Brown asked about the climate related zoning pieces. Mr. Heath relayed that these amendments will be explored further at the upcoming ZAP meeting on October 16th.

7. Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Heath informed the Planning Board of the upcoming meeting schedule.

8. Adjournment

At 8:45 p.m., upon a motion by Mr. Steele, seconded by Ms. Molinsky, and unanimously approved, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Barney Heath, Director of Planning & Development