

Nadia Khan

From: DEBORAH CROSSLEY <djcrossley26@verizon.net>
Sent: Friday, July 08, 2016 2:37 PM
To: James Freas; Alexandra Ananth; Barney Heath; Robert Waddick; buchbinder stephen
Cc: laredo marc; Nadia Khan; James Mcgonagle; Scott F. Lennon; Jake Auchincloss; James R. Cote; Susan Albright; John W. Harney; Deborah J. Crossley; Gregory R. Schwartz; lipof rick; Ouida C. M. Young; Allan Ciccone Jr.; Alison M. Leary; Emily Norton; brousal-glaser barbara; Theodore M. Hess Mahan; Amy Sangiolo; Leonard J. Gentile; John Rice; Brian E. Yates; Victoria Danberg; Richard B. Blazar; Ruthanne Fuller; Lisle Baker; David Kalis; Cheryl Lappin
Subject: Re: Orr Building process

RE: Orr Building Comments

Although we are to focus on traffic circulation issues at next week's meeting, which makes sense, I write - in a bit more detail - the comments I raised at the first hearing, which are more related to massing and the pedestrian experience, to be discussed at a later date.

Questions, Comments, Requests.

For the petitioner:

SIDEWALKS

The experience at the sidewalk is key to the successful transformation of this block as a desirable place that will attract the community... So the relative width of the sidewalk must provide sufficient scale for multiple activities - and "feel right" sized relative to the size of the building.

To that end, especially since the width varies - I had asked the petitioner to provide a larger scale plan of the entire sidewalk along both Walnut and Washington streets, and several cross sections showing the full width of the street, sidewalk and existing abutting and proposed new building heights. One can be at a crosswalk, but others should be at the 'normal' curb showing a parked vehicle etc.

MASSING along WALNUT ST.

The proposal shows a block of five full stories uniformly along the entire length of Walnut. This facade could use some variation along the street - in part this might be accomplished by setting back portions of the fifth story to create roof deck areas, as well as cutting into the facade to create sheltered balconies...

Although I see the lowered heights behind the back yards of the Foster Street residents, - going to four stories in the rear - these sections of the building already are set quite far back from the rear line. Reducing some height along Walnut instead may help that street scape.

This is also one place where the street / sidewalk building section would be useful.

All for now,
 Deb

Deborah J. Crossley
 COUNCILOR

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When responding, please be advised that the Secretary of the Commonwealth has determined that email may be considered a public record.

On Jun 13, 2016, at 11:02 PM, Susan Albright wrote:

Dear all,

As requested - Here are my current questions/issues on the Washington Place Project.

For the planning dept

1. People are worried that there will be a proliferation of MU4 developments from Newton Corner to West Newton. The next thing some folks are saying is that that this proliferation should be nipped in the bud by not approving Washington Place. What is the opinion of the planning department regarding where MU4 is appropriate on Washington St.? As MU4 was developed for village centers, what parts of Washington st would be considered village center and what would not?
2. Should there be any waivers of the transparency and doors requirement? (I don't think so)
3. How do the parking waivers requested for Washington Place compare to the waivers granted for Chestnut Hill Square. Parking in that development can be tight. Did we grant proportionally similar waivers for that project? I understand that project has a supermarket – leaving that aside - please give us some point of comparison. I'm particularly worried about medical offices in the Newtonville project

For Planning and DPW –

4. The developer is proposing a traffic mitigation package. Recognizing that we have a complete streets policy, what traffic mitigation plan is recommended by you for the north side of the Walnut St. intersection?
5. Should we request help to mitigate traffic effects from the nearby intersections of Lowell Ave/Washington st. intersection, Cabot st./Walnut intersection, and the Walnut st/Watertown st. intersections to make sure that the Walnut Washington St Intersections works with these other three intersections?
6. DOT is reducing stops in Newtonville – what can we do to make sure the DOT knows that we have two projects, one coming on line and one which may come on line, which depend on transit to make them work. What assurances can be granted by DOT to assure us that this transit stop will be useful to our new Newton residents who want to use the T.

For the petitioner

7. Please add some direct access to Walnut st the way we have it from Bram Way to Walnut st.
8. How will shadow impact the Foster St. Neighborhood and the interior plaza (summer? winter?)
9. What kind of interior landscaping will there be in the interior court yard- can it be “greened-up” will there be enough sunlight in the plaza for green (lawn?plants? trees?).
10. Many would like to see some 3 bedroom apartments – can some be added?
11. Will you contribute to a mitigation fund to enhance the T station?
12. DOT is reducing stops in Newtonville (see #6 above)– what help can you provide to make sure that DOT will bring back service if this project is approved.
13. A lot has been done to break up the massing of the project. However the massing on the Walnut st side and the Washington Terrace side could still use some mitigation? What design effects could be brought to bear to make these two parts of the building less monolithic-looking?
14. Regarding foster st. – what are we doing to assure that neighborhood is not bothered by light trespass?
15. Finally – Having more than 15% affordable is a good thing (sorry – not really a question!)

Susan

On Sat, Jun 4, 2016 at 3:59 PM, Marc Laredo <laredofamily@rcn.com> wrote:

Colleagues,

On Tuesday evening, the Land Use Committee begins its deliberations on the Orr Building project. As has been our custom, I intend to have the meetings begin promptly at 7 pm and conclude no later than 10 pm. After the June 7 meeting, we will have a site visit on Monday, June 13 at 8 am and resume deliberations on July 12. I expect that we will have several meetings in the fall on this project.

On June 7, we will begin with a presentation by the developer which I expect to last approximately 45 minutes. That will be followed by a relatively brief presentation by the planning department (its memorandum is in our packet). Thereafter, I would like to have *questions or requests for further information* from Committee members and other Councilors. Please keep your remarks limited to questions or requests for information. We will have plenty of opportunity for discussion and debate at later meetings. If you can put questions and requests for information in writing that would be helpful as well to both the developer and staff. Following our questions and requests for information, I will ask members of the public to speak. The public hearing will remain open so that those who are not able to speak on Tuesday night will have an opportunity to do so at a later date. Of course, written communications are welcome at any time.

Our June 13 site visit will be an opportunity to have the developer and staff walk us through the site. Please do not engage in any substantive dialogue regarding the merits (or lack thereof) of the project. The purpose of the site visit is to provide us with information about the project as proposed.

The following are some of my initial questions/requests for further information (I will raise them on Tuesday night as well):

1. What is the total square footage of space in the existing buildings, broken down by residential and commercial space?

2. What is the current assessed value of the current space, again broken down by residential and commercial space?

3. Please discuss how the proposal fits with the Comprehensive Plan's goals for increased commercial space, especially in Newtonville.

4. The current proposal is for approximately 40,000 square feet of commercial space and 200,000 square feet of residential space. What would the financial impact be if it was one-third commercial and two-thirds residential, one-half commercial and one-half residential, or all commercial?

5. Please provide us with data showing the city's population, the number of residential units in the city, and the amount of commercial space in the city for each of the past ten years. Please then add in estimates for increases due to recently approved but not yet built projects such as Riverside, Austin Street, and Turtle Lane.

6. Please explain why the highest figure (.2) was used to estimate costs for commercial space? How does the fiscal impact analysis change if a different ratio is used?

7. Please provide some examples of other recent mixed use developments (excluding Austin Street) with similar residential/commercial ratios as are proposed for this project.

8. Please provide more detail regarding the proposed traffic signal improvements at Washington and Walnut Streets.

9. Please provide the support for the statement in the Planning Department's memorandum that six stories is generally considered mid-rise development and appropriate in village centers and then explain what five stories is generally considered.

10. Please expand on how this project will be linked with other proposed improvements to the Newtonville village. In particular, how will this project be connected to improvements on the other side of the Turnpike?

11. What improvements, if any, are proposed to make public transit more accessible in the area?

12. Please expand on the uses of the proposed public space and compare it to what was approved for the Austin Street project.

13. If this project is approved, what will the impact be on the other buildings on Washington Street and Walnut Street? Would the area on Washington Street between Newtonville and West Newton also be considered to be appropriate for the mixed-use designation? What about the area from Newtonville to Newton Corner?

I am asking our Committee Clerk, who is copied on this email, to post this email with the materials for this special permit on the City Council website. I would also ask that, if possible, emails that we receive on this project also be posted.

Thanks,

Marc

When responding, please be aware that the Massachusetts Secretary of State has determined that most email is public record and therefore cannot be kept confidential.

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Susan Albright
Councilor-at-Large
Ward 2

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