

From: "Srdjan Nedeljkovic - Pain Clinic" <srdjan@zeus.bwh.harvard.edu>
Subject: Land Use Committee meeting November 13, 2012
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Date sent: Tue, 13 Nov 2012 10:40:15 -0500

Dear Ms. Finucane,

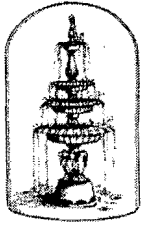
Attached is a memo from the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council regarding Petition 306-12, the proposal to waive the dimensional requirements for the existing non-conforming parking facility at 35-41 Lincoln Street in Newton Highlands.

The NHNAC has had an opportunity to review the petitioner's proposal and recommends that the Land Use Committee approves the petitioner's request regarding waiving dimensional controls for the number of non-conforming parking spaces on the 35-41 Lincoln Street parcel, with that number being 16 spaces based on our assessment. However, we do not feel that lighting, surface and maintenance requirements for the nonconforming parking facility should be waived. These elements should be required as part of the special permit approval.

The reasons for our decision and the basis of our recommendations are included in the attached letter. I would appreciate if you could please distribute this letter to the members of the Land Use Committee prior to the November 13-th meeting. Also, I would appreciate if you could provide printed copies of the letter to the committee members during the meeting.

Thank you,

Srdjan Nedeljkovic
President, Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council



Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council

Memorandum

Ted Hess-Mahan
Chairman, Land Use Committee
City of Newton
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

November 13, 2012

Re: Item #306-12
Special Permit petition regarding 35-41 Lincoln Street, Newton Highlands

Dear Mr. Hess-Mahan:

The Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council (NHNAC) has considered the proposal to waive the dimensional requirements for the existing non-conforming parking facility at 35-41 Lincoln Street in Newton Highlands. At our November 2012 meeting, the NHNAC voted to support this proposal with certain conditions as described below.

Please be advised that the NHNAC has been working on developing a comprehensive parking plan in Newton Highlands. The proposal we are considering would create 150 designated parking spaces in and around the village center, 100 of which would be for business employees and 50 for commuters. Importantly, in its current iteration, the proposal would also potentially generate a revenue stream for the NHNAC for village beautification, improvements, and other community projects.

Our survey, which was done last August, found there to be 16 spaces behind the 35-41 Lincoln Street storefront, of which 14 were occupied.

From our survey, we also found:

- 1) Parking occupancy of the on-street metered spaces was 55/59 (93%) and was 47/61 (77%) in the Hartford Street metered municipal lot. Therefore, of the 120 metered spaces in the Highlands, 18 were unoccupied at the time of our survey.
- 2) Parking occupancy on residential streets was approximately 15% (428/3200) and occupancy in off-street lots (primarily commercial) was approximately 45% (684/1502).
- 3) In the village center, off-street occupancy in private lots in the commercial zone was approximately 41% (169/412).

The NHNAC has as one of its primary concerns preserving and enhancing the vitality and economic success of the village of Newton Highlands. We and many other members of our community are proud

of having a village center that thrives due to the mix of retail and commercial establishments that are integrated within walking distance of our residential streets and that are accessible by public transportation. Lately, however, due to the recent closure of several of our established businesses, there has been concern that our pedestrian traffic has diminished and that this may be having an adverse effect on our village center. Therefore, the Area Council has taken a general approach that we should support new business activities in the Highlands. It is clear that a more comprehensive approach is needed as various proposals are presented. A larger issue is the need to reevaluate our zoning codes and design expectations for development to make sure that these are consistent with community needs. This review is a major project that the NHNAC will likely undertake over the ensuing months.

Recommendations:

- 1) The petition for special permit/site plan approval to waive dimensional requirements and curbing for the existing nonconforming parking facility at 35-41 Lincoln Street **SHOULD BE APPROVED**. Please note that our independent parking survey counted the number of spaces in this facility is 16.
- 2) Lighting, surface and maintenance requirements for the nonconforming parking facility **SHOULD NOT BE WAIVED**. The facility should be brought up to current standards on these requirements.
- 3) The request alternatively to waive the required 5 additional parking stalls required for a change of use at 35-41 Lincoln Street should be **REJECTED**.
- 4) The petitioner should be advised to undertake transportation demand management strategies to reduce parking demand and auto travel to the site. Strategies that may be considered for this site include: charging employees for parking, providing free or subsidized MBTA passes to employees, managing staggered shifts for employees, participating in a village-based shared parking program, and support for sidewalk and streetscape improvements to encourage walking. Providing a transportation demand management plan should be **REQUIRED** as part of the special permit approval.

In summary, the NHNAC supports Petition 306-12 to allow for 16 spaces in the nonconforming parking facility to be considered for a change of use at 35-41 Lincoln Street. Under the condition that these spaces are subject to current standards for lighting, surface and maintenance requirements, we encourage the Board of Aldermen to grant the petitioner's request and to waive the requirements for parking dimensional controls at 35-41 Lincoln Street.

Sincerely,

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic, M.D.

Srdjan S. Nedeljkovic, President

On behalf of the Newton Highlands Neighborhood Area Council