



# PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

January 4, 2021

## Members Present:

Peter Doeringer, Chair  
Kelley Brown  
Sonia Parisca  
Chris Steele  
Kevin McCormick  
Jennifer Molinsky  
Sudha Maheshwari

**City Councilors Present:** Councilor Malakie

## Staff Present:

Barney Heath, Director of Planning and Development  
Andrew Lee, Assistant City Solicitor  
Lou Taverna, City Engineer  
John Daghlian, Associate City Engineer  
Cat Kemmett, Planning Associate

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting

Ruthanne Fuller  
Mayor

Barney Heath  
Director  
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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## 1. Board of Survey—Request to change names of streets for the Northland Project

At 7:01 pm, Chair Doeringer opened the meeting. At 7:03 pm, Mr. Steele motioned to open as the Board of Survey, seconded by Ms. Molinsky and unanimously approved.

The proponent for this item, Attorney Alan Schlesinger, explained that his team is developing a number of buildings on the property and they need addresses and building numbers. There are 5 streets running through the property that they wish to name. The street names selected are meant to reflect the industrial past of the area.

Attorney Lee clarified that for any way that is not a public way, the name must be approved by the Board of Survey. The Board of Survey can evaluate the names but does not need to opine on any aspect of the building of the roads.

Mr. Steele asked if any of these names duplicate existing street names in the city. Mr. Taverna confirmed that none of the proposed names are currently in use in the city. Mr. McCormick said that Lattice Road is an extension of Tower Road, and it might be confusing that it changes names. Mr. Taverna said that it seems to make sense that Tower Road ends at the tower, and then changes to Lattice road. The request for a special permit and rezoning for this item will be discussed at the January 5 Land Use meeting.

Upon a motion by Mr. Steele and seconded by Ms. Molinsky, at 7:12 pm the Board voted unanimously by a roll call vote to approve the name changes. And exit their meeting as the Board of Survey.

## **2. Minutes**

Ms. Molinsky requested a few corrections to the minutes for December 7. Upon a motion by Ms. Parisca and seconded by Ms. Molinsky, the minutes for December 7 were accepted as amended with 6 voting in favor and Mr. Brown abstaining.

## **3. Zoning Redesign Update**

Mr. Heath explained that Planning staff plans to recommend a slightly different approach the working through Zoning Redesign, which will be presented soon at ZAP, and to move on from the discussion of Residential Districts shortly. Ms. Kemmett said that a number of materials are now available on the city website from the December community engagement events, with more to come soon, and that the January 25<sup>th</sup> ZAP meeting will include an update on the synthesis of information from those events.

Chair Doeringer asked for clarification about the direction ZAP is heading in, and if it is true that ZAP no longer anticipates that there will be a vote on Zoning Redesign in 2021. Mr. Heath confirmed that ZAP is not expecting to vote on a full ordinance draft within this year, given how much material there still is to cover. He also added that several controversial proposals discussed at ZAP over the past few months have been taken off the table for now. Staff will be creating an annotated draft for Article 3 to circulate soon.

Chair Doeringer asked for information about a potential housing trust that has been discussed. Mr. Heath relayed that this is a ZAP agenda item and that the Housing Partnership is looking into establishing a housing trust. They are evaluating what other communities are doing and seeing how such a trust might function and be funded in Newton.

Mr. Brown discussed some of the challenges of tackling a large project like Zoning Redesign where it is difficult to achieve unanimous agreement. He pointed out the merit of some of the proposals in Zoning Redesign and the Washington Street plan that have proven controversial, and expressed a wish that they would not be taken off the table without a more thorough collective conversation and understanding of the pros and cons of those proposals. He expressed that the Planning & Development Board can play a role in advocating strongly for progressive change in this process.

Ms. Molinsky shared some of her experience at a talk hosted by the Council on Aging and the need for more accessible multigenerational housing.

Ms. Maheshwari asked if there is a strategy to deal with posts sharing misunderstandings or misinformation online, outside of formally hosted city meetings. Mr. Heath responded that being more responsive to misinformation and providing clarification is a goal for the department, and staff want to do it in a user-friendly way and get out and respond to folks in the community. Staff plan to bring in more subject matter experts more in the future to help work through complex issues and create more informational material.

Ms. Parisca said that the city should provide tools so people can understand how we can address climate change and the need for more housing. It's easy to say you are in favor of these things, but there is not a lot of agreement on the methods to achieve that, and the city can do more to empower residents to understand how to think about those challenges. Ms. Maheshwari added that we can get more buy-in for plans to address these issues with better education and awareness for the intersection of things that people care about.

Mr. McCormick said that some of those controversial proposals for Article 3 were presented without a lot of in-depth data. If staff come in with more data and a better grounding in the issues and how to address them from the from the start, people might be more open to considering those proposals. Chair Doeringer expressed disappointment that ZAP is walking back from some of the more ambitious policies put forward. Knowing that the vote won't be until 2022 introduces a lot of unknowns.

#### **4. Adjournment**

Upon a motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Steele and unanimously approved, the meeting was closed at 7:52 pm.