



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Urban Design Commission

MEETING MINUTES

A meeting of the City of Newton Urban Design Commission (UDC) was held virtually on Wednesday, **September 22nd**, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81308506582>

Ruthanne Fuller,
Mayor

The Chair, Michael Kaufman, called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M.

Barney Heath,
Director
Planning & Development

Shubee Sikka,
Urban Designer
Planning & Development

Members
Michael Kaufman, Chair
Jim Doolin, Vice Chair
John Downie
Robert Linsky
Carol Todreas
William Winkler
Visda Saeyan

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I. Roll Call

Those present were Michael Kaufman (Chair), Jim Doolin (Vice Chair), John Downie, Bill Winkler, Robert Linsky, and Visda Saeyan. Shubee Sikka, Urban Designer, was also present.

II. Regular Agenda

Sign Permits

Mr. Kaufman asked if the Commission felt there were any applications they could approve without discussion.

The Commission agreed to approve the following signs without discussion:

Sign Permits

2. 1185-1197 Centre Street – TD Bank

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 14 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern facade facing Centre Street and Pleasant Street.

4. 17 Pelham Street – Baan Thai Spa

Proposed Signs:

- One awning principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 20 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Pelham Street.
- One awning sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 4 sq. ft. of sign area perpendicular to Pelham Street.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs at 1185-1197 Centre Street – TD Bank and 17 Pelham Street – Baan Thai Spa. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed. The decision is hereby incorporated

as part of these minutes. According to the Newton Zoning Ordinance, staff concurs with the recommendation to approve the signs as proposed.

1. 89-97 Wyman Street - Starbucks

- Applicant: Andy, Serrato Signs
- Proposed Signs:
 - One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 33 sq. ft. of sign area on the northwestern façade facing Wyman Street.
 - One wall mounted secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 33 sq. ft. of sign area on the southeastern façade facing Wyman Street.
- Presentation and Discussion:
 - UDC asked if the proposed signs are the same size as the existing signs. The applicant responded that the letter height is the same size and are shorter because the word “coffee” is being removed.
 - UDC also asked if the signs extend above the parapet. The applicant responded that it does not extend above the parapet, they have tried to superimpose the signs as best as they could. The proposed sign sits the same way as the existing signs.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 89-97 Wyman Street - Starbucks. Ms. Saeyan seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.

3. 30-34 Langley Road – Eastern Bank

Applicant/Representative: Tom, Metro Sign

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 50 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building facade facing Langley Road.
- One wall mounted secondary sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 1 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern building façade facing the rear parking lot.
- Four window signs, non-illuminated, with approximately 3 sq. ft. of sign area.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Mr. Winkler asked if the sign had to stretch all the way across the façade, it may be helpful to fit the sign between the pilasters so it’s the same width as the glass. The applicant responded that it could be done but there is an existing border tubing underneath the existing sign and the backer is intended to cover that and rebrand because Eastern Bank doesn’t have silver as part of their branding, primarily using the sign band, concealing what exists underneath and applying channel letters on top.
- Ms. Saeyan commented if the applicant were to center the sign, the left side will look better, Eastern Bank can’t use silver background because the letters of the sign are lighter.
- Mr. Linsky commented that the proposed sign looks fine, its covering up the Century Bank sign, it’s the same size overall.

- Mr. Doolin commented that since the proposed sign fits within the dimensional controls, its hard to require any change.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 30-34 Langley Road. Mr. Linsky seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 5-1 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, and Visda Saeyan in favor and William Winkler opposed.

7. 200-220 Boylston Street – Eastern Bank

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 41 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing the parking lot.
- One wall mounted secondary sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 4 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing the parking lot.
- Two awning signs, non-illuminated, with approximately 6 sq. ft. each of sign area on the eastern building façade facing the driveway.
- One awning sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 4 sq. ft. each of sign area on the western building façade facing the parking lot.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 200-220 Boylston Street – Eastern Bank. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.

5. 305 Walnut Street - Citizens

Applicant/Representative: Heather Dudko, Devin White

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, externally illuminated, with approximately 15 sq. ft. of sign area on the eastern building façade facing Walnut Street.
- One perpendicular secondary sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 4 sq. ft. each of sign area on the western building façade facing Philip Bram Way.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Mr. Kaufman asked about a detail of how that sign fits in the pediment. It's hard to tell how it will look. How is it mounted? The applicant responded that it is essentially a gold painted, it's a projecting bar, it projects out about a foot around the pediment above the doors and mounts with just masonry screws to the plates around, on to the surface of the brick. They mount exactly how the light bars and the awnings mount.
- Mr. Winkler asked if it will be possible to fit the sign within the pediment? The applicant responded that it is a decorative store entrance they are trying to not change any base architecture of the building. Mr. Winkler also asked if the entire building was being painted and applicant responded that it will be painted. Mr. Winkler also mentioned that it will be good to find shutters for the window on the left.
- Mr. Kaufman asked about the window sign that it is less than 25% of the window area. Staff responded that initially it was more than 25% of the window area and the applicant has submitted revised sign which is less than 25% of the window area.

- Ms. Saeyan asked about why the building was being painted? The applicant responded that it was getting a refreshed look and the new color looks better with the new branding.
- Mr. Winkler asked if the sign needs to be approved by Historic Commission. Staff mentioned that they will check if it needs to be approved by the Historic Commission. Staff checked with the Chief Preservation Planner after the meeting, and it does require an approval either by Preservation Planner or Historic Commission.

MOTION: Mr. Doolin made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 305 Walnut Street - Citizens. Ms. Saeyan seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 5-1 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, and Visda Saeyan in favor and William Winkler opposed.

6. 823-833 Washington Street – da la Posta

Applicant/Representative: Stuart Pitchel, SRP Signs

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, non-illuminated, with approximately 89 sq. ft. of sign area on the southern building façade facing Washington Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Mr. Winkler asked the applicant if the sign could be split in the middle so the structure of the building could read through, further down the street, most of the other tenants have done it in a similar way. The applicant responded that the business owner wants to use the existing sign structure. There were questions about illumination of the sign. The applicant responded that it is a non-illuminated sign and if the business owner decides to add lighting, he may come back to UDC to add goose neck lights in the future.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 823-833 Washington Street – da la Posta. Mr. Downie seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed.

8. 741-747 Beacon Street – Tous Les Jours Café

Applicant/Representative: Ricky Zeng

Proposed Signs:

- One wall mounted principal sign, internally illuminated, with approximately 36 sq. ft. of sign area on the northern building façade facing Beacon Street.

Presentation and Discussion:

- Mr. Winkler asked the applicant if the sign could move a little to the right, so the “T” & “S” are centered over the pilaster. Some other members agreed with the suggestion. The applicant responded that they could make that change and resubmit a revised sign.
- Mr. Doolin asked the Commission if “Café” was big enough to be legible, maybe it will help if it was slightly bigger. Some other members agreed with the suggestion. The

applicant responded that “café” is this size because it has been requested by the franchise, it’s the logo.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion to approve the signs as submitted at 741-747 Beacon Street – Tous Les Jours Café with a condition. Mr. Winkler seconded the motion, and none opposed. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote, Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, John Downie, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and William Winkler in favor and none opposed. The Commission approved the sign on the **condition** to move the sign a little to the right, so “T” & “S” are centered over the pilasters.

At 7:28 pm, Mr.Kaufman suspended the Urban Design Commission, and enter the Commission in its role as Fence Appeal Board.

Fence Appeal

1. 564 Dedham Street – Fence Appeal

- **Applicant/Representative:**

Andrew Sipperley, Attorney
Carlos Abboud

- **Fence Appeal:**

The property located at 564 Dedham Street is within a Single Residence 2 district. The applicant has added the following fence:

- a) **Side Lot Lines** – The applicant has added a fence set at both side property lines with a solid fence (masonry wall), height varies from 6 to 8 feet, approximately 149 feet in length on each side.

The proposed fence along the side property line appears to be not consistent with the fence criteria outlined in §5-30(d)(1) of the Newton Code of Ordinances.

- **Presentation and Discussion:**

At the meeting, the applicant explained the reason for the appeal. The masonry wall/fence was allowed by a building permit and it was built. After almost 100% completion, ISD has said that it is not in compliance and have asked the homeowners to cut the wall, which will be cost prohibitive. Mr. Winkler asked if the height of the wall was included in the drawings submitted with the application, did it show parts that were 8 feet tall? The applicant responded that it described the height as 6 feet. The challenge is the overall slope and the 8-foot long panel sections and the steep drop-off. Also, during the construction process, it was checked and inspected and was also found to be compliant. Anything that was not in compliance, was adjusted. After the wall was built, ISD measured it from the neighbor’s property and not from the homeowners’ side and found it to be not compliant. The attorney for the applicant mentioned that the homeowners have a retaining wall on their side, given the disparity, there is a difference in height. The attorney also mentioned that under the code, the wall only should have been measured from the homeowner’s side.

Mr. Winkler asked about who owns the wooden fence next to it? The one adjacent to the masonry wall, there is a wooden fence. The applicant responded that the wooden

fence is the neighbor's fence. Mr. Kaufman asked who owns the wooden fence that is falling. The applicant responded that also belongs to a neighbor. The attorney also pointed out that in the picture which shows the falling fence, you can also see an existing retaining wall on the homeowner's side, the masonry wall needed a substantial foundation so the retaining wall was reinforced, but it existed before the wall was built and ISD should have measured only from the homeowner's property.

Mr. Winkler asked where the fence was taller than 6 feet? It's not clear on the drawing where it is taller than 6 feet. The attorney responded that from the homeowner's property, it's substantially 6 feet throughout except a small area that has a patio (shown in picture 8 in the application). It will be a substantial cost to the homeowners to cut down the wall (10's of 1000's of dollars) and it will also be a safety issue with that drop-off.

Public Comment:

The UDC heard from the following member of the public:

Aamir Masood, 572 Dedham Street, Abutter

Mr. Masood commented he's one of the neighbors representing other neighbors as well. He mentioned that he would like to go through the construction process of this wall for the past 2 years. The wall project was a badly managed project overall, the reason is that for 2 years, multiple contractors came and went. Paul from the Inspectional Department came in multiple times and we showed him the measurements even when the project started, in the middle and at the end of the project showing variances of 6,7, 8 feet. We highlighted those variances very early on in the project to the City. Besides that, we hear that the wall has been finished, Mr. Masood said that he invites everyone to come and see the wall from his side, it has a lot of distractions on the wall, the paint has come off multiple times. HE also mentioned that he would like the City to come back and review the quality and construction of the wall, make sure it is safe for any kids to be around the wall. He also mentioned that there have been situations where folks came and put in more soil on the side of the wall. He also mentioned that he measured the side of the wall from his side, and it measured about 9 feet all across.

The attorney responded that the homeowners have had bad luck with the contractors trying to get this wall done. The homeowners have been working tirelessly to get this wall finished. With regard to the height issue, the attorney mentioned that a copy of the building inspectors' note is provided that said that the fence appears to be in compliance with regards to the height. He also mentioned that the wall is substantially completed, not fully completed. The applicant also mentioned that they also have a letter from Spruhan Engineering stating that everything was constructed according to their specifications and everything is safe.

Mr. Kaufman asked if ISD says that the wall was constructed and meets the height requirement, then why is UDC having this discussion/appeal? The staff responded that they have spoken to Legal Department. The Legal Department has mentioned that initially there was a permit issued for a 6-foot tall fence, but the fence is in fact more than 6 feet. The fence was not built as per the permit. Mr. Kaufman asked if it is more than 6 feet at a couple of locations or is it more than 6 feet all along. The staff mentioned that they asked the applicant

to provide a copy of the exact height of the fence (locations where the fence is taller than 8 feet) but the applicant has said that the site is sloping so its difficult to identify the exact height. The applicant said the fence is 6-feet from their side and that Mr. Paul Gilbert, inspector at ISD, inspected it 3-4 times and verbally gave his clearance and requested a few changes during construction and all those changes were made as requested. According to the applicant, Mr. Gilbert measured everything from the homeowner's side and said everything is substantially compliant. The applicant also mentioned that one neighbor keeps calling the City and complaining for the City to inspect it again. After that complain, Mr. Gilbert came back to the site and measured and said that there are a few areas on the neighbor's side that are more than 6 feet. The applicant also mentioned that there is huge variation in gradient from the front to the back, from left to the right, its not a flat wall. The homeowner mentioned that they got a survey done and went three feet in from the border of the land to avoid the foundation from being on the neighbor's property, when the homeowner went inward to build the wall, the grade is higher than the neighbors. ISD has issued a violation because as per ISD the fence is taller than 6 feet and hence the applicant appealed to UDC.

Mr. Kaufman commented that the applicant is asking for a relief, but it is not clear what relief is the applicant seeking. Is it 8 feet the entire length of the fence or only some portion of the fence is more than 6 feet? The staff clarified that ISD issued a fence permit for a 6-foot tall fence, but the fence was built taller than 6-feet and ISD has issued a notice of violation and has issued a Stop Work order at this property. Mr. Kaufman commented that it is not clear the relief the applicant is seeking and who should provide that information. Staff informed the Commission that it is applicant's responsibility to provide that information and staff asked the applicant to provide it and the applicant responded that due to the topography and grade changes, it is not possible for them to provide the exact height of the fence at various spots.

Mr. Kaufman commented that the applicant needs to provide more information and this hearing should continue at the next meeting.

Mr. Doolin commented that the applicant needs to provide more information. It will be helpful to have a plan that had specific sections of the fence that are in excess of 6 feet, it will help to understand the degree of relief needed. There is also a grade change between the neighbors and owners' side of the fence. We do not have a good view in the cross section of how dramatic the slope changes are. The attorney for the applicant mentioned that when the original contractor was fired and the second contractor was hired, the second contractor had to excavate to reinforce the foundation. Mr. Doolin also asked for a picture of the fence from the abutting neighbors property looking at this fence.

Mr. Kaufman asked the applicant to provide a survey showing spot grades and determine the height of the fence at various spots. Mr. Kaufman also mentioned that it will be helpful to get more information from ISD. Mr. Masood commented that he will allow any surveyor to come to his property for any measurements or photos to get a complete picture.

Ms. Saeyan asked if there is any retaining wall built under this wall or is it just the footing? The attorney mentioned that there was an existing retaining wall, the grade of this property was higher and then when construction was done, a new foundation was laid for the masonry. As seen in the pictures, the old retaining wall was loose stones. Ms. Saeyan

mentioned that if the height has to be maintained at this side, then there needs to be a solution at the neighbor's side and adjust at their site. The attorney commented that section 5-30 of the Newton Ordinance, it states *"The height is the vertical distance from the natural grade of the ground at the location where the fence is erected (or from the top of a retaining wall if a fence is placed on such a wall) to the top of the fence section or panel."*

Mr. Downie commented that a survey needs to be presented as an elevation of the wall with the grades shown on both sides with heights of each of these segments of the wall or spot grades.

Mr. Kaufman commented that this application needs to be tabled until we get an elevation in addition to the spot grades.

Mr. Kaufman asked about the fence to the right of this property (572 Dedham St.). As seen in pictures, the fence at this property appears to be 6 feet tall. Mr. Kaufman asked if the homeowner was present at the meeting and when was that fence built and if there was a building permit issued for that fence?

There was discussion about the front wall as well. The attorney mentioned that the stone wall in the front is existing and it is 3 feet tall. Mr. Winkler asked if the new wall along the side lot line drops in height according to the rules of the Fence Ordinance? The applicant responded that it is setback 3 feet from the sidewalk. Mr. Kaufman commented that it appears to be compliant.

UDC requested the applicant to get the survey done and come back to UDC, either in October or November, whenever the survey is completed.

At 8:06 the Commission adjourned the Fence Appeal Board portion of the meeting and reconvened as the Urban Design Commission.

Design Review

1. 106 River Street Design Review

- Applicant/Representative:
Terry Morris, Attorney
Andrew Consigoli, Architect
- Documents Presented: Context plan, neighborhood photos, renderings, site plan, landscape plan, plot plan, sections, floor plans, and elevations.
- Project Summary:

The applicant proposes to construct a three-story, 6-unit multi-family dwelling with 12 ground level parking stalls, within the building. The proposed three-story building contains approximately 17,892 square feet.

The proposed use requires a special permit in the BU1 zoning district for a three-story structure under Section 4.1.2.B.3 and a ground floor residential use under Section 4.4.1. The proposed three-story building contains approximately 17,892 square feet, creating an FAR of 1.13, where 1.0 is the max allowed by right, and 1.5 is the max allowed by special permit for a three-story building per Section 4.1.3. With a lot size of 15,804 SF, the proposal is for 6

dwelling units is at a density of 2,634 sf/du. As a corner lot the lot has two front setback requirements. The pre-existing front setbacks are 1.7' (River St) and 2.4' (Elm St) respectively. There would be 12 parking stalls in separate garages beneath each unit and 2 open-air visitor spaces. Given ISD's view of what constitutes a "parking facility", the project requires a special permit to allow parking within 20 feet of a boundary (§5.1.8.A.1); waive requirement for one accessible parking stall (§5.1.8.B.3); and allow for reduced entrance driveway width (§5.1.8.D.1), all under §5.1.13.

- Presentation & Discussion: The applicant's representative provided a summary of the project (see above). The Urban Design Commission had the following comments and recommendations:

The UDC commented that this is an interesting, skillful project.

Ms. Saeyan asked where the entrance to the corner unit is. The applicant responded that it is under the porch and the entire porch will belong to that unit. Ms. Saeyan commented that the porch doesn't feel right. The applicant responded that it could be because the porch needs a plinth or a deck, so it ties more with the building than just sitting on the ground in the landscape. Another option will be to make the porch smaller. The applicant also mentioned that the openness of the porch was to confirm to improve the visibility at the intersection.

Mr. Kaufman asked if any of the units are affordable. The applicant responded that the affordability doesn't kick in until you reach 7 units, that's one of the provisions of the Inclusionary Zoning.

Mr. Downie asked if all the units will be electric. The applicant responded that they will all have electric pumps.

Mr. Linsky asked if there is any basement. The applicant responded there is an existing basement underneath the existing building. If there is any basement, it would be under the corner proposed unit since it is already dug out. There is possibly some ledge in some parts of the site and because the parking goes in the back, there isn't much basement space for the other proposed units.

Mr. Linsky also asked that the first-floor plan shows the parking for each unit but there are two additional spaces. The applicant responded that will be for visitors, they are both covered, all the parking is covered.

Mr. Kaufman asked if there is an egress from the raised courtyard? The applicant responded that they are from within each unit and are considering providing a stairway from the top to the back or to the garage. The applicant also said that they first thought of providing a staircase in the front (as shown in some of the drawings) but are going to remove it due to safety reasons. Ms. Saeyan commented that it is probably a good idea since the staircase doesn't fit well with the elevation.

Ms. Saeyan mentioned that the porch may be too grand for that corner. The applicant responded that they would investigate it and may be tone it down a little.

Mr. Winkler commented that it is great seeing a scheme that doesn't have garages/driveways in the front.

Ms. Saeyan asked if the existing electric poles will stay? Do they block any entrances? The applicant responded that they don't believe so but will double check and confirm that. They also mentioned that the Special Permit process may require under-grounding.

Mr. Linsky commented it is a very interesting project.

Mr. Doolin commented it is a very skillful project. This is a tough, corner site. Regarding Elm Street elevation, the length of the building is long, the architecture is good and elevated private space is good, but it is a long building. The covered parking in a way is good but would have preferred to see a landscaped green opening in keeping with the neighborhood. The existing building across the street is quite different, building shape may be similar but the site plan and massing is quite different. Hiding the parking is skillfully executed. There is limited driveway space and probably not much space to provide landscape screenings for the abutters who will be seeing the driveway and parking. Will there be any fencing to deal with it? What is the actual dimension, landscape materials that will be appropriate here? Is there any additional roof equipment or protrusions through the roof that may be visible? Appreciate the solar panels. In the massing, there was a linking piece at the second level, what is that? The applicant responded that the idea behind the linking piece is to create a courtyard space. The applicant mentioned that they have been talking to the 3 Ward Councilors and one of the comments that came up early on is that this didn't feel like a courtyard space but felt like an open deck and by enclosing it, it felt more like a bungalow feeling and it gave a scale to this courtyard. What is it used for? The applicant responded that it is usable living unit space.

Mr. Doolin also commented that the corner is important, and it is good that safety has been considered. Its going to be super important to look at the landscape plants to make sure there is no growing understory so there's visibility which is a tremendous improvement from the existing condition of the site. The applicant mentioned that the landscape architect is Tom Ryan, from Ryan Associates who did the landscape for the project across the street. The applicant mentioned that they will be putting a lot of time and effort in the landscaping.

Mr. Kaufman asked how many bedrooms these units are typically? The applicant responded that they will be a mix of unit sizes, 2, 3, or 4 bedrooms. Mr. Kaufman commented that some of these units will probably have children because of the unit size. There's no place for them to play. There needs to be some green open space. The applicant responded that if you head south on Elm Street, there is West Newton Playground, with a very significant tot lot, it is within a 5-minute walking distance. Mr. Kaufman responded that is good, but parents won't be able to look out their window and watch while the kids play outside the kitchen.

The architecture is great, and the concept is great, but no open space is a major drawback.

Ms. Saeyan commented that maybe something can be done in the front.

Mr. Kaufman asked about the gravel area in the northeast part of the site. What's happening in that area? The applicant responded that they would investigate that space about providing a play space in that area. There is also a south facing space that may work as well.

Mr. Downie commented that it appears that A6.7 elevation doesn't match the plan. The applicant responded they will investigate why it doesn't match. On the side that closes off the courtyard is only occupiable on second floor and above, you have to drive under that as if you are driving under a plinth to get to the parking garage. Looking at the plans closely, it was clear that it is built as a wall so the only entrance for the parking garage to units A, B, and C is through the entrance shown as dotted lines on the first-floor plan between units D and E. The applicant responded that it was a recommendation from one of the Ward Councilor that they thought it would be better to have that as an opening and each unit would have their own door for safety. Mr. Downie commented that functionally, it may create a problem. For a resident in unit C, if they wanted to take their car for a short trip, they will need to back out, go all the way across the garages for units A and B, pivot, and then go through that one little opening and then turn finally get to the street. That will be an annoyance. The applicant responded that they looked at all the turning radii and it works. Mr. Downie commented that it will work but it's going to be annoying. The applicant responded that they had to give a little here so there are no garages facing the street. Mr. Downie mentioned that he is supportive of the way it looks both on Elm Street and River Street. It's a visual problem when cars come off the street or physical problem when they go through this sort of back.

Mr. Doolin commented that there may be too many units at this site. One less unit will give a lot more flexibility to the site plan and parking. A plan with five units could be very different, has different qualities and meets the street in a similar way. The applicant responded that as a developer there are financial aspects to consider, six units is the amount that is required to do the type of architecture and high quality.

Mr. Kaufman commented that it may help to have 1 more curb cut. The applicant responded that the only place to provide it would be at River Street but would defeat the purpose of using that space as a play space.

Mr. Downie commented that a second curb cut could be provided if it were 2 buildings, so the curb cut could be in the middle of both the buildings. The applicant responded that zoning doesn't allow for 2 buildings in this zone, there is no avenue to seek that kind of relief. Ms. Saeyan commented that maybe play space can be provided at the intersection, it's a great idea to have a second way out.

Mr. Downie asked if it is required to provide visitor parking and the applicant responded that they are not required to provide visitor parking. It might help to not provide parking, there are plenty of on-street parking spaces.

Mr. Downie commented that the two points that are the weakest from visual standpoint, first is the connector between the two buildings (the one along Elm St. and the other along River Street) with the door and the stair, it feels funny. The second weakness is the plinth that happens above the drive to four of the six parking garages.

2. 11 Florence Street – Sunrise Design Review

- Applicant/Representative:
 - Stephen Buchbinder, Attorney
 - Philip Kroskin, Sunrise
 - Mark Moeller, JSA Architects
- Documents Presented: Sunrise services, context photos and view, aerial view, proposed site plan, rendering, floor plans, elevations, and proposed rendering.
- Project Summary: The applicant proposes to construct an elderly housing with services facility, 4-story building, with 120 beds/95 units and 45 parking spaces. The applicant has filed a special permit application with the Newton City Council, and the first public hearing will be on October 5. In addition to a special permit for the use, the applicant has applied for various other relief, including:
 - development more than 20,000 square feet
 - construction of a 4-story building
 - retaining wall greater than 4 feet located in a setback
 - install a freestanding sign
 - various waivers for the underground garage.
- Presentation & Discussion: The applicant's representative provided a summary of the project (see above). The Urban Design Commission had the following comments and recommendations:

Ms. Saeyan asked if these will be private or Medicaid. The applicant responded that it will be private, not Medicaid.

Mr. Kaufman commented that this will look very handsome in this neighborhood, it's a different context, will certainly look a lot better than Lifetime building. It will fit well in the neighborhood. On a couple of the floors, balconies are visible but not on all the floors. It will be nice to provide balconies at every floor for orientation, outdoor views, and natural light. The applicant responded that there are two kinds of activities, "wet" and "dry". The balconies provided are part of large activity rooms that you have access to the balconies from these rooms. The balconies are part of resident common areas.

Mr. Doolin commented about the façade. The building has a strong vertical element emphasizing the verticality of the building. It's a 4-story building, but is it important to emphasize the verticality? He also commented on the solid to glazing ratio. The applicant responded that the ability to have orientation within the corridors is primarily in the center area (dining room on the ground floor, lounges on some floors, activity rooms on some floor). Most of the perimeter on the outside are private units so there are not many locations with corridors or living rooms, along the street side and the driveway side. The ability for the residents to come in a common fashion is going to be around the common enclosed garden area which is shielded from the street. There are a lot of wayfinding elements within the buildings so the residents know where they are going and how to get there, emphasizing short corridors so they are not walking too long, there are furniture pods for the residents to stop and pause along the way. In an assisted living facility, the residents will be spending most of their time in the common spaces, downstairs or in activity areas. This is not like an

apartment building, where 15% of the space is common space but, in this case, 50% of the space is common space. There is an enormous amount of natural light and the lighting scheme is very good. Wayfinding, accessibility to common space, and natural light is there.

Ms. Saeyan asked if the applicant had considered pitched roof to decrease the verticality of the building and also tie more with the neighborhood. The applicant responded that the elevations on the sides of the building along the driveway side, it's a long elevation so didn't want to reinforce long horizontal lines to the extent that was avoidable. There's a fair amount of plane change in the distance that the bays that have overbuilt roofs are projecting out. There's a fair amount of distance in the base plane of the elevation to help break the long, horizontal line. The introduction of colored siding along the top will also act as a counter point to the vertical lines. The applicant also pointed out the sketch presented probably emphasizes more of the verticality than any other type of view, so it is more exaggerated by the sketch.

To point out some more horizontal elements that do exist, there are a series of porches, a mound of fenestration at the base of the building, stone base that runs the full length of the driveway. A variety of plinth heights that separate the stone transitions into the siding. There are a series of horizontal expressions that help to break the verticality.

There was also discussion about sustainability. The applicant pointed out that they have gone much further in sustainability goals and expectations for this building than the last building on Washington Street. The applicant mentioned they have hired a new sustainability consultant and they have submitted a 16-page project sustainability goals memorandum as part of the submission. They recognize the requirements within the City, green building rating program is the standard that will be met. There is a very comprehensive plan, recognizing the goals of Sunrise and of the City.

Mr. Kaufman commented that the Commission looks forward for the applicant to come back. This is a great, excellent start.

Project Updates

1. 333 Nahanton Street and 677 Winchester Street – 2 Life Opus

The applicant reported the changes that were made in accordance with UDC's feedback. UDC commented that they appreciate all the changes and thanked the applicant for the update.

2. Other project updates

Staff provided the following updates on projects reviewed by UDC in the past few months:

a) 306 Walnut Street (CVS site)

- Have applied for Special Permit.
- The applicant is discussing easement with the Masons
- Continuing public hearing, will most likely withdraw this year and refile next year

b) 383-387 Boylston Street

- Had an initial public hearing in August and will probably be back in October-November.

c) 967 Washington Street

- Public hearing on September 21st. There will most likely be a vote later this year.

- d) **386-394 Watertown Street**
 - Public hearing on September 28th
- e) **Dunstan East**
 - Approved by ZBA on 9/9
- f) **Riverside**
 - LUC approved on August 24th
 - City Council voted on 9/9
- g) **333 Nahanton Street and 677 Winchester Street – 2 Life Opus**
 - Was approved by LUC
- h) **1114 Beacon Street**
 - Took off 4th floor
 - Public hearing in June with revised transportation data
- i) **River Street & Lexington Street?**
 - Scrapped the hotel
 - Applicant is working on a mixed-use building but hasn't applied yet.
- j) **40B – Nonantum Road (along the river)?**
 - It was approved last year, the applicant has applied for a foundation permit
- k) **1149 Walnut Street**
 - Approved by City Council in April and May

III. Old/New Business

1. Approval of meeting minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes of August meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Kaufman made a motion recommending approval of the regular meeting minutes for April as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Downie. All the members present voted, with a 6-0 vote (Michael Kaufman, Jim Doolin, Bill Winkler, Robert Linsky, Visda Saeyan, and John Downie) in favor, none opposed. The decision is hereby incorporated as part of these minutes.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kaufman made a motion to adjourn the meeting and there was general agreement among the members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Shubee Sikka.

Approved on November 10, 2021.