

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 3, 2022



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

Barney Heath
Director
Planning & Development

Members

Kelley Brown, Chair
Kevin McCormick, Vice Chair
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Member
Peter Doeringer, Member
Jennifer Molinsky, Member
Barney Heath, *ex officio*
Laxmi Rao, Alternate

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Members present:

Peter Doeringer, Chair
Kelley Brown, Vice-Chair
Kevin McCormick, Member
Jen Molinsky, Member
Lee Breckenridge, Member
Amy Dain, Alternate
Barney Heath, *ex officio*

City Staff:

John Sisson, Economic Development Director
Heather Zaring, Executive Assistant

Meeting held virtually by Zoom Meeting

1. Rezoning Petition #394-22 Request to Rezone 2 parcels (136-144 Hancock Street/ 169 Grove Street) to MR2. Continuation of Public Hearing/Potential Vote

Chair Doeringer opened the meeting and the continuation of the public hearing for this item. Director Heath reminded the Board that this item was originally presented at a joint meeting of the Planning Board and the City Council Land Use Committee on September 26th.

David Oliveri of Civico Development shared a presentation on the rezoning request. The Walker Center on Grove Street was constructed in 1850 and used in a variety of ways over the years—most recently as a bed and breakfast and as housing for students. In 2021, the property was divided into two parcels with one being acquired by the City of Newton and one being acquired by Civico Development. The property is currently zoned Single Residence 3. Civico has appeared before the Auburndale Historic District Commission and received conceptual design approval for their proposed development. They have held numerous community meetings as well. The rezoning request would allow the property to be redeveloped as a series of 16 individual units consistent with an MR2 zone. The site is .3 miles away from the Riverside MBTA and Auburndale Commuter Rail Station. The rezoning request would permit the Walker Center building to be split into multi-units while retaining its historic façade. The request would be to rezone to a Multi-Residence 2 zone. There will be two affordable units created as part of the development along with a partial cash payment. Finally, Mr. Oliveri stated that he believed that because of the project's proximity to transit it qualified as a single majority rezoning vote as part of the state's Housing Choice Act.

Chair Doeringer reopened the continued public hearing. With no additional public comment forthcoming, Mr. Brown moved to close the public hearing and it was unanimously approved. Ms. Molinsky asked about landscape screening of the

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garages and whether any of the units would be accessible. Mr. Oliveri responded that most of the garage spaces will be hidden from the street and that landscaping will be provided. As to accessibility, Mr. Oliver indicated that there will be an elevator in the Walker Center and that there will be one floor living units.

Mr. Brown asked about whether other zones were contemplated. Mr. Oliveri responded that they only focused on the MR2 zone. Mr. Brown also asked about the necessity for surface parking spaces. Mr. Oliveri responded that they believed that they had the necessary amount of spaces to satisfy neighborhood concerns.

Upon a motion by Ms. Molinsky, seconded by Ms. Breckenridge to approve the rezoning request for petition #394-22, the Planning Board voted 5-0-2 (Mr. Brown and Director Heath abstaining) to rezone the parcel from SR3 to MR2.

Upon a second motion by Mr. Brown, the Planning Board found that the rezoning petition because it provides for increased density and is within a half mile of transit qualifies for a simple majority vote of the City Council. The Board voted in favor 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining).

2. Petition #355-22 Request to Rezone 2 parcels (11 Florence Street/318 Boylston Street)

At the petitioner's request this item was postponed to the November Planning Board meeting.

3. Review of Rezoning recommendation letter for 1314 Washington Street

Chair Doeringer introduced Mr. Brown's draft recommendation letter. Discussion ensued about amending the letter to reflect the idea of a step-down to the residential neighborhood. At the end the Planning Board moved to accept upon a motion by Ms. Breckenridge, an amendment to add a single reference to the increase in allowed density to the letter was passed 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining).

4. Village Center Zoning Update

Director Heath indicated that the Village Center zoning maps will be presented at the October 24th Zoning and Planning Committee meeting.

5. Elections

Chair Doeringer offered a statement thanking the Board for their support and comments over his years as chair. Due to time constraints, Chair Doeringer indicated that he needed to step-down as chair.

Upon a motion by Chair Doeringer, seconded by Ms. Breckenridge, Mr. Brown was nominated to become chair. The motion passed 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining). Upon Mr. Doeringer's motion to elect Mr. Brown as chair, the Board voted 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining) to elect Mr. Brown as chair.

Upon a motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Breckenridge, the Planning Board voted 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining) to nominate Mr. McCormick to serve as Vice Chair. Upon a motion by Mr. Brown, seconded by Ms. Breckenridge, the Board voted 6-0-1 (Director Heath abstaining) to elect Mr. McCormick as Vice Chair.

6. Minutes

Upon a motion by Ms. Breckenridge, the minutes of the September 12th meeting were approved 7-0-0.

7. Adjournment

At 8:35 p.m. the meeting was adjourned unanimously.