



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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**Board - Committee - Commission - Council:**

**Community Planning and Development Commission**

Date: 2022-11-07

Time: 7:30 PM

Building: Town Hall

Location: Hybrid Meeting – Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session:

Purpose: Hybrid Meeting

Version:

Attendees: Members: Heather Clish, Chair; Catrina Meyer, Pamela Adrian, John Weston, Tony D'Arezzo – Associate

**Members - Not Present:**

**Others Present:**

Community Development Director Julie Mercier, Senior Planner Andrew MacNichol, Town Counsel Ivria Fried, Town Counsel Ethan Dively, Town Engineer Ryan Percival, Jacquelyn Welch, Mike Welch, Nik Shah, Josh Latham, Donnie Gerrity, Chris Gregoris, Penny Flaherty, George Liakos, David Traniello, Kevin Emery

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Andrew MacNichol

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**Topics of Discussion:**

**MEETING HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

Ms. Clish called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

Ms. Mercier gave an overview of the hybrid meeting set up and procedures.

**Executive Session 3: Discuss strategy with respect to GC Fodera Contracting, Inc., v. CPDC (459 Main Street Litigation)**

Ms. Adrian made a motion that the CPDC enter Executive Session under Purpose 3 to discuss strategy with respect to GC Fodera Contracting, Inc. v. CPDC 459 Main Street litigation and to include Community Development Director Julie Mercier, Senior Planner Andrew MacNichol, Town Counsel Ivria Fried and Town Counsel Ethan Dively. Mr. Weston seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-0 via roll call vote.

At 8:36 PM, the CPDC returned to Open Session.

**Public Hearing, Release of Funds – Three Party Agreement Veterans Way Subdivision**

Ms. Meyer read the public hearing notice, which was sent to residents of Veterans Way, developer Jackie Welch and Lowell 5 Cent Savings Bank.

Ms. Mercier gave an overview of the subdivision.

Town Engineer Ryan Percival went through the bond estimate and noted that the top course of pavement was done on Friday and that he believes the subdivision is substantially complete at this point. Mr. Weston clarified with Mr. Percival that the remaining items are not things that are typically expected to be done during the colder months, and that it is not necessary to call the bond. Mr. Percival agreed for the most part. He said there are things



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that could be done like bound-work and as-builts in the fall and winter, but that the CPDC should hold the bond until certain aspects of the utilities can be verified.

Ms. Clish asked what the timeframe is for the remaining items, in terms of what is reasonable. Mr. Percival said that the work completed to-date substantially completes the subdivision and what remains is mostly engineering components. He suggested May might be a good time to check in.

Nelson Lau, Veterans Way resident, asked for clarification from Mr. Percival about the utilities. He asked Mr. Percival about the street light, which is supposed to be put in. Mr. Percival said his understanding is that RMLD has been paid the fee for the street lamp and that the installation of the lamp is between the developer and the RMLD. He said he could double-check whether the fee for the lamp has been paid.

Jackie Welch, developer, noted that there has been some miscommunication about the electrical easement and once clarified the street lamp will be installed. She said she is working through that details and hopes to have it cleared up within a couple of weeks.

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to close the public hearing for a Release of Funds on the Veteran's Way subdivision. Ms. Adrian seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0-0.***

### **Sign Permit Application**

#### **77 Haven Street, Rocco's Salon**

Mr. Nik Shah explained the proposal for a halo-lit wall sign at 77 Haven Street. He said only the word "Rocco's" would be halo-lit because LED lights do not fit behind the other letters.

Mr. D'Arezzo went through the sign application noting that the labeled width does not include the text for the hair salon in the dimensions. Mr. Shah said he would fix the application. Mr. MacNichol noted a revised permitted application is conditioned.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked about timing for the sign to be lit, and noted that there are not specific time restrictions in Town. Mr. Shah said it would be lit only when dark from dusk to 11PM.

Ms. Meyer asked if the existing blade sign is being removed. Mr. Shah said that it is.

Mr. D'Arezzo and Mr. Weston said that the lighting hours does not need to be a condition, just a request, as many other businesses in Town are not subject to restrictions.

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign at 77 Haven Street. Mr. Weston seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

### **Continued Public Hearing, 40R Plan Review**

#### **25 Haven Street, 25 Haven Street LLC**

Attorney Josh Latham, Architect Donnie Garrity, Architect David O'Sullivan and property owner Walderi Lima were present on behalf of the application.

Mr. Latham noted that many changes have been made since they last came to CPDC in June. He went through a presentation and noted the changes which include a reduction in units from 25 to 12, a reduction in density from 58 du/a to 27 du/a, a reduction in FAR, reduction in parking to 16 spaces, larger commercial spaces including an increased outdoor dining area, and three times more open space including green space and a connecting pathway through the site. He noted that the closure of the curb cut on Haven Street allows for 2-3 more parking spaces on the street. He said they are no longer trying to preserve the



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historic RMLD building, but instead they can provide a better setback from the western property line. He commented that this would be the lowest density of any mixed-use 40R project in downtown, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> most commercial space of any 40R in downtown (noting 30 Haven and Postmark have more).

Mr. Garrity of O'Sullivan Architects highlighted some of the features of the building. He said the path works with the other outdoor spaces. He commented that they have started conversations with RMLD about the transformer location. He noted that the site can accommodate a loading zone because it no longer has to fit within a garage.

Mr. Garrity went over the layouts for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors – noting that each floor will have 5 units and that the 4<sup>th</sup> level will be pulled back to the midpoint (33' setback from Haven Street and 22' from the west side) to mitigate the presence of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. The 4<sup>th</sup> floor will have two penthouse units, each of which will have a private deck. The roof plan will be dedicated to mechanical units.

He noted the façade is brick masonry for the commercial space and white/gray smooth textured panels for the residential floors. He described views and elevations from each side.

Ms. Adrian asked to take another look at the Green Street elevation to see the entrance and exit for the parking lot. She asked how they are addressing the one-way nature of Green Street. Mr. Latham mentioned discussions of modifying Green Street with PTTTF that were not favorable, even though it could make sense to make Green Street two-way from his perspective due to its width at the end.

Ms. Meyer asked what the discussion at PTTTF entailed. Ms. Mercier noted one comment was that anyone who pulled in by mistake would have to make some awkward movements to get out. Mr. MacNichol pointed out that the discussion was based on the plan with two garages and entrances and may be worth revisiting due to the revised layout.

Mr. Weston gave them kudos for really thinking through and working with all the comments the CPDC provided. He said the one unfortunate piece is that the historic façade couldn't be maintained, but that there was questionable value of maintaining the façade from a structural perspective. He said he has no major concerns or comments at this time.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked where snow storage is proposed on the site. Mr. Garrity said they have a couple opportunities that they will explore with the civil engineer. Mr. D'Arezzo also asked for a shadow study to ensure it does not impact abutters. He opined that it is a wonderful project that looks like it will meet even the new zoning requirements. Mr. Latham confirmed that they did get very close to meeting them.

Ms. Adrian asked about what will happen with the existing trees on site. The Applicant confirmed some trees would need to be removed.

Ms. Clish said she is pleased with the design and that it suits all sides. She asked how big the inset balconies are. Mr. Garrity stated that some are 12x10 and others are 6x14. They are pretty big. Ms. Clish asked if additional landscaping could be provided along the Green Street side by the brick wall and parking lot to help breathe life to the area. Mr. O'Sullivan pointed out that the brick wall by Bunratty's is really long and has been landscaped so nicely that you don't realize it's a brick wall.

Ms. Meyer noted that the sidewalk on Green Street is not shown and asked whether it would still remain. Mr. Garrity answered in the affirmative. Ms. Meyer asked if a path could be provided from the parking lot to the path.





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Mr. Garrity confirmed that all the parking spaces will be 9'x18' with a 26' wide drive aisle.

Virginia Adams, speaking on behalf of the Reading Historical Commission, noted that they had asked from the beginning that the Art Deco design on the front of the building would be reused, since it is the last Art Deco building downtown. She said she is very disappointed personally that it will not be preserved. She asked whether approval of the 40R would make the lot more saleable and whether approved plans would transfer to a potential new owner. Ms. Clish said the approval runs with the property not the owner. Mr. Latham affirmed this and noted that many other buildings have turned over and the permit is binding. Mr. MacNichol noted that approvals can potentially expire if not built under certain timeframes.

Sarah Brukilacchio, Green Street owner, spoke on her behalf but noted that she is on the Reading Historical Commission. She offered some suggestions in lieu of preserving the façade, similar to what was done in the entry lobby at Ace Flats. She said that the RHC would be happy to work with the developer and property owner to create a display. She asked that the National Register Historic plaque be placed on the façade.

Ms. Brukilacchio commented in favor of the green space and asked whether a fence would be needed. She asked whether the wider southeastern corner could be used as a parklet with a Little Free Library or something. She clarified that the sidewalk should remain. Mr. Garrity stated he would look into such.

Ms. Clish asked if the perspective from Green Street could be clarified as to location. Mr. D'Arezzo asked them to consider EV charging for all parking spaces, even those not under the building.

Mr. Latham requested a continuance of the hearing to December 12<sup>th</sup> and offered to Extend the 120-day Timeframe for the CPDC to file a Decision to January 12, 2023. He noted that in order to preserve the zoning freeze, he needs to submit a Definitive Subdivision Plan by December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

***Ms. Meyer moved that the CPDC agree to the Extension of Time of the 120-day timeframe to file a decision to January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

***Ms. Meyer moved that the CPDC continue the hearing for the 25 Haven Street 40R project to December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30PM. Mr. Weston seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

### **Minor Site Plan Review**

#### **581-591 Main Street, Chris Gregoris**

Penny Flaherty and George Liakos were present on behalf of the application.

Mr. Liakos explained that they met with the Reading Historical Commission but are unable to make any changes to the proposal due to cost. He said the original plan was to have yellow brick on the top to match the brick at the ground level, but that they will use red brick on top and paint the brick on the bottom of the building to match.

Ms. Clish said she is not keen on the painted brick. Mr. Liakos said they can change the top brick to red and keep the bottom yellow if that's the preference of the CPDC. He said he wants to get the project completed because it is a safety concern. He suggested he could work with the Reading Historical Commission on other changes in the future.



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Mr. Weston agreed that painting the brick is a bad idea and will look unpleasant. He recapped the discussion from last time and said that he hears they are unwilling to do anything that the RHC wants. Mr. Liakos said they are looking into signage and other things the RHC suggested.

Ms. Clish said she is hesitant to approve the project without a real understanding of what will be done. Ms. Flaherty said after the project is done they will look at other design alternatives and improvements. Mr. Liakos said they can look into signage.

Virginia Adams, RHC, noted they had a special meeting just for this project which was quite amicable and that they came up with a list of suggestions: to use red brick on the new part, save the historic urns and decorative pieces for use somewhere else, to add dentil molding on the bottom of the new parapet, keep the original pilasters in place, change the brick at the bottom from yellow to red, and add a sign that says "Grant Block" to the façade. Ms. Adams said they thought they had an agreement but then received an email back from the proponent rejecting almost all the ideas. Ms. Adams said they appreciate the ability to talk about the project.

Ms. Mercier asked about the intention for saving the urns and historical pieces – whether they would be stored on-site or stored off-site by the RHC. Ms. Adams clarified that typically historical artifacts are best stored on-site so that a current or future owner can reuse them.

Ms. Brukilacchio, RHC member, added that the Celebrations Trust Fund could be used to offset the cost of the brick work. Mr. Liakos asked whether dentil work alone would be enough to get the project approved.

Mr. Weston recapped that the first issue is preserving the historic elements, and the second issue is what to do with the replacement that is satisfactory for CPDC approval.

Ms. Clish noted that driving around New England you see lots of creative brick work.

The CPDC went back and forth with the applicant on design of the parapet. The applicant commented that they could fix the safety issue and then come back with design ideas. Ms. Meyer clarified that CPDC is not asking for them to stick something decorative on top of the brick, but rather to incorporate the design into the brick work. She asked if it is feasible to shore up the safety issue and then work out the design, but then questioned whether this could really be a two-step process if there is no way to compel them to come back with designs.

The CPDC talked at length about what should and could happen with the urns. Ms. Adams felt strongly that at least one urn should remain stored on the property. Another suggestion was to take close-up photos for documentation purposes. The owners agreed to ask their tenants if they would be willing to store an urn in the property basement.

The CPDC agreed to condition the submittal of a revised architectural rendering that includes a more sophisticated parapet design.

The CPDC reviewed the Draft Decision.

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the Minor Site Plan for 581-591 Main Street. Ms. Adrian seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

**Minor Site Plan Review**  
**48-54 Village Street, 48-54 Village Street LLC**



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Attorney David Traniello, and owner Kevin Emery, were present on behalf of the application.

Ms. Meyer read the public meeting notice into the record.

Mr. Traniello introduced the applicant and described the process to-date which included getting a Special Permit from the ZBA for changes to the non-conforming use. He explained that it is an existing 4-unit building which will remain a 4-unit building but be slightly increased in size. He noted that the new building will meet all current zoning setbacks.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked about the 18' parking spaces and questioned the size. Mr. \_\_\_ explained the parking dimensions and their relation to the angled lot line. Mr. D'Arezzo opined favorably about the project, noting that it's nice to see this size project fits near downtown Reading given the new MBTA Communities Guidelines.

Ms. Clish asked about materials and colors. Mr. Emery said it would be navy blue or white hardi-plank.

Mr. Weston asked where the mass is being added to the structure. Mr. Emery explained that the existing building is A-frame with dormers, and that the proposed structure is a full three stories with a flat roof. The building height is 32' based on the average grade.

Ms. Clish said it looks like it will work well for the site, and the fact that it fits within setbacks is even better.

Ms. Meyer agreed with Mr. D'Arezzo that it's nice to see a smaller size project like this in Reading.

Mr. Weston asked about the front and landscaping. Mr. Emery clarified that the grass area will be cleaned up and they will use existing curb cuts and not modify the sidewalk. Sidewalk will be replaced if damaged.

Ms. Clish asked about the front porch. Mr. Emery said there will be small usable balconies with glass doors; they were added to give the front façade character.

Ms. Adrian asked if he has met with neighbors. Mr. Emery said a number of families came to the ZBA meeting and were mostly concerned with parking but happy to see a new building. He stated he will reach out to abutters with project updates.

The CPDC reviewed the Draft Decision.

***Ms. Meyer moved to approve the Minor Site Plan for 48-54 Village Street. Ms. Adrian seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

### **Other Business**

#### **135-149R Howard Street, Definitive Subdivision Lot Release**

Mr. MacNichol and Ms. Mercier explained that the CPDC voted on the lot release for this subdivision back in February 2022, but that a signed document is needed for properties to transfer ownership. The CPDC signed the document.

#### **MBTA Communities Update**

Ms. Mercier updated the CPDC on the status of the early action technical assistance for MBTA Communities compliance. She noted that the Compliance Model is not available for other communities yet. She explained that it is very complex and takes into account a lot of nuances of zoning, but that it's not designed to handle split zoned lots, does not take





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existing units into consideration, and that it excludes undersized parcels. She showed the CPDC the 5 districts that were selected for input into the model, and described some of the potential challenges with some of the districts. She noted that the downtown 40R district is now eligible to be included, based on a change made to the final guidelines, and that she included A-40 northeast of downtown, the two Business A districts along south Main Street, and A-80 in the southeast corner of Town. She explained that the model looks at existing zoning parameters, makes certain assumptions, and then evaluates all parcels in each district to determine the overall unit capacity for that district. She also noted that for the downtown 40R district, she inputted the zoning information based on what is required for by-right projects at a 20 unit per acre minimum. Staff should be receiving a report later this week that shows unit capacity and makes recommendations on ways to fix the zoning districts to increase unit capacity.

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**4/11/22**

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/11/22 as amended. Ms. Adrian seconded and it was approved 4-0-1.***

**5/16/22**

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the minutes of 5/16/22 as amended. Mr. Weston seconded and it was approved 4-0-1.***

**6/13/22**

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the minutes of 6/13/22 as amended. Ms. Adrian seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

The Board elected to review additional meeting minutes at a future meeting date due to the late time in the evening.

### Adjournment

***Ms. Meyer made a motion to adjourn at 11:29 PM. Mr. Weston seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***

### Documents Reviewed at the Meeting:

- CPDC Agenda 11/7/22
- CPDC Meeting Minutes of 4/11/22, 5/16/22, 6/13/22
- Public Hearing, Veteran's Way Release of Funds
  - Bond Estimate Summary
- Sign Permit Application, 77 Haven Street
  - Sign Rendering and Specifications, 77 Haven Street – Rocco's Salon
  - Draft Certificate of Appropriateness, dated 11/7/22
- 40R Plan Review, 25 Haven Street
  - Architectural Plan Set, dated 10/24/22
  - Public Comment, Barnes Email 11/3/22
- Minor Site Plan Review, 581-591 Main Street
  - Project Summary, received 9/12/22
  - Existing and Proposed elevations, received 9/12/22
  - Pedestrian Access and Scaffolding Plan, received 9/12/22
  - Draft Decision, dated 11/7/22
- Minor Site Plan Review, 48-54 Village Street
  - Plot Plan of Land – existing and proposed conditions, dated 9/5/22
  - Architectural Elevations and Floor Plan, dated 2022
  - Proposed Landscape Plan, dated 11/3/22
  - Draft Decision, dated 11/7/22
- Joy Lane Lot Release



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- o Town of Reading CPDC Lot Release Signature Form