



## Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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### Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

#### Community Planning and Development Commission

Date: 2023-11-6

Time: 7:30 PM

Building: Town Hall

Location: Hybrid Meeting – Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Hybrid Meeting

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members In person:** John Weston, Chair; Tony D'Arezzo, Vice Chair; Hillary Mateev; Tom Armstrong; Mark Wetzel; Heather Clish

**Others Present in person:** Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol; Senior Planner Mary Benedetto

**Remote Participants:** Town Counsel Ethan Dively

**Minutes Respectfully Submitted By:** Mary Benedetto

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#### Topics of Discussion:

#### **MEETING HELD IN THE SELECT BOARD ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA ZOOM**

Mr. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:31 PM.

#### **Continued Public Hearing, Site Plan Review Application**

#### **413 Main St, McDonald's c/o Bohler**

***Mr. D'Arezzo made a motion to continue the public hearing for the Site Plan Review application for 413 Main St to December 11, 2023. Mr. Weston seconded the motion, and it was approved 5-0-0.***

#### **Executive Session**

#### **With respect to GC Fodera Contracting, Inc. v. CPDC (459 Main St litigation)**

Mr. Wetzel made a motion to enter Executive Session under Purpose Three, to discuss strategy relative to the litigation involving 459 Main Street, because an Open Session may have a detrimental impact on the litigating position of the public body, and to invite Community Development Director Andrew MacNichol and Senior Planner Mary Benedetto to attend the executive session, and, once finished, to return to Open Session and continue on with the meeting at the conclusion of the Executive Session. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0-0.

The CPDC entered Executive Session at 7:44 PM. The CPDC returned to Open Session at 9:02 PM.

#### **Other Business**

**6-16 Chute St Extension of Time Request** – Mr. MacNichol updated the members on the status of the project, primarily that it is on hold and they have been unable to start any work yet. There was a round of questions and discussion about exactly what the extension means. Mr. Wetzel asked what would happen if they did not approve the extension. Mr. Weston stated that in his opinion the bar to do work and "start" the project is a low bar. Mr. D'Arezzo asked about how long a building permit is valid if they don't start the work and it was confirmed a building permit is valid for 6 months once it is pulled, after which it expires if work hasn't started. Ms. Clish asked what the one-year extension would entail and Mr.



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Armstrong asked if there was a way to put conditions on the approval. The members discussed that they wouldn't want the applicant to demolish half the building to "start construction" and then leave it in a half-complete state indefinitely. Mr. Weston and Ms. Clish stated that they didn't see a big reason not to extend it. Ms. Clish asked if they didn't grant an extension and the project expired and then they came back under a new application, would it go over the old or new 40R, and Mr. MacNichol indicated it would go under the new 40R regulations. Ms. Mateev said that it was positive that they came back now instead of in February and Ms. Clish stated that she wouldn't want to grant extension after extension. The members concluded that it was acceptable to grant to extension to this project.

***Ms. Clish made a motion to extend the time for the Downtown Smart Growth District Plan Review Decision for 6-16 Chute St by 365 days from March 16, 2024 to March 16, 2025. Mr. D'Arezzo seconded the motion and it was approved 5-0-0.***

**SWEC Update** - Mr. MacNichol updated the members on the RFI and there had only been one response. Ms. Clish clarified that the proposal was just for the land behind the Burbank arena. The SWEC working group is supposed to wind down by the end of December with recommendations.

**2024 Schedule Discussion** – Members agreed to test out starting the meeting start time at 7pm starting in January and to see how it goes.

**MBTA Communities Update** – The Commission members asked for an update from staff about how Reading's proposal and timeline stacks up compared to other communities and staff discussed what other nearby communities are working on and the comparison on timelines and proposals. Mr. MacNichol began reviewing the presentation for the upcoming 11/8 event. Members offered comments on the proposed slides for the meeting. There was a discussion about the difference between setting a 6-unit cap in the new zoning district vs. setting a 22 units/acre density maximum. Members agreed with staff that they preferred the max 22 units/acre. There were questions about upland area requirements and the spread of lot sizes in the district. The group discussed the two map options being proposed. The members indicated a strong preference for not running district lines down the center lines of streets and instead following the lot lines in a middle of a block, so that in the long-term it wouldn't result in a situation where one side of a street was developed and the other side remained all single-family homes. Staff indicated this was certainly possible for the final map. There was a discussion around the merits of including or not including the existing historic districts within the new zoning district, with Commission members seeing both sides of the arguments for and against. There was a discussion surrounding design guidelines and that the members anticipate and want a robust design guide for the district. There was a discussion about if deed-restricted affordable units could be included in the proposal, with staff indicating that if the public signs off on the unit density approach there is potential to include a 10% affordability requirement at larger unit counts, with details TBD.

### **Meeting Minutes**

***The Commission reviewed the minutes for October 16, 2023, and made changes. Mr. D'Arezzo made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/16/23, as amended. Ms. Mateev seconded the motion and it was approved 4-0-2 (with the two members who were not present abstaining).***

### **Adjournment**

***Ms. Mateev made a motion to adjourn at 10:52 PM. Ms. Clish seconded and it was approved 5-0-0.***



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### Documents Reviewed at the Meeting:

- 6-16 Chute St Extension of Time Request
- 413 Main St McDonald's Continuance Request
- MBTA Communities Materials
- Draft Minutes: 10/16/23
- Calendar for 2024