



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

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By Town Clerk GP at 12:25 pm, Dec 11, 2024

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

Community Planning and Development Commission

Date: 2024-10-07

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: Town Hall

Location: Hybrid Meeting – Zoom and Select Board Meeting Room

Address: 16 Lowell Street

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Hybrid Meeting

Version: Approved

Attendees: **Members In person:** John Weston, Chair; Tom Armstrong, Associate; Heather Clish, Secretary; John Arena

Members Present on Zoom: N/A

Members Not Present: Hillary Mateev

Others Present in person: Andrew MacNichol, Community Development Director; Olivia Knightly, Senior Planner; Tony D'Arezzo; Carlo Bacci; James M. Joly; Brian D. McGrail; Heather Monticup; Chris York; Steven DeFuria; Peter Sandorse

Present on Zoom: N/A

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Olivia Knightly

Topics of Discussion:

MEETING HELD IN THE SELECT BOARD ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

Mr. Weston called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

Mr. MacNichol gave an overview of the hybrid meeting procedures.

Public Hearing, Special Permit and Site Plan Review for Mixed-Use, 346-348 Main Street, Park Realty Trust

Ms. Clish read the notice of public hearing into record.

Mr. MacNichol stated that this is the second mixed-use application in the Main Street Corridor.

Brian McGrail, the applicant's attorney, spoke on behalf of the property owner and applicant, Jim Joly, and stated that the applicant is seeking site plan approval and a special permit to allow a 15-unit residential mixed-use development. Mr. McGrail stated that the applicant team recently attended a Development Review Team meeting with town staff. He stated that the current use of the property is the real estate office of Mr. Joly and that they would look to maintain the office space in the future building. He continued to say that the proposed project is a mixed-use building with 15 residential units, 9 one-bedroom units, 6 two-bedroom units and approximately 2,150 square feet of commercial space. Mr. McGrail said the property is in the Business-A zoning district where mixed use is permitted by special permit. He added that the applicant is aware of the potential for future zoning changes to the area and that the proposed changes do not have a detrimental impact on the



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application. Mr. McGrail said the property is located within the Priority Development Area #2 identified in the Reading 2015 Economic Development Action Plan.

Chris York, the project engineer, presented the site civil plans to the board. He stated the proposed building meets all zoning setback requirements. Steven DeFuria of Phoenix Architects presented the architectural plans.

Heather Monticup, of Greenman Peterson, presented the traffic plans for the project. Ms. Monticup stated that the project proposed closing the driveway on Main Street, which is under MassDOT control, so all site access will occur on Park Avenue. The proposed redevelopment is expected to add 5 trips during weekday morning peak hours and six trips during the weekday evening hours. She added that an access permit is required and that the project information has been submitted to MassDOT for a completeness review.

Mr. Arena asked how vehicles will access the parking area. Mr. York said that cars will access parking from the Park Ave entrance and the total parking capacity is 22 spaces including the space on Park Ave. Mr. Arena asked how the impervious surface is reduced on site and Mr. York said that the existing site is primarily pavement, and the proposed development will be adding pervious area along the perimeter of the site. Mr. Arena expressed concern about increased parking on Park Ave, which is a private way. He continued to ask about the dumpster location and Mr. York said that this is still being worked out.

Mr. Weston reviewed the comments received during the Development Review Team Meeting and mentioned that the applicant will need to continue to address these comments.

Mr. Arena asked how snow removal is handled on Park Ave and Mr. MacNichol said that the town does not plow this road.

Mr. Weston stated that there have been neighborhood concerns about trash management and dumpsters and that this should be a priority for the applicant to work out. He added that they should be mindful of screening to abutters. Mr. Joly, the applicant, said that they eliminated trash collection within the building due to pests and that the trash will be located outside the building, and they aim to solve the trash collection solution. Mr. Weston said that if access is from Park Ave they will need to understand the property owner's rights for the private way. Mr. Arena asked how the board can determine these rights and Mr. Weston responded that a document stating their rights to the way would be needed.

Mr. Armstrong asked what the rental unit cost would be per unit. Mr. Joly stated that rental numbers are in flux but could be in the range of \$2,800 to \$3,200 for a two-bedroom unit. Mr. MacNichol added that two of the units are deed restricted affordable units.

Ms. Clish asked how the design will change once the plans are updated to reflect comments from the fire chief and others. She referenced the South Main Street Design guidelines and requested that the applicant try to include street trees along Main Street if possible.

Mr. Weston told the applicant that the design does not need to focus on maintaining a residential feel as Main Street is evolving. Mr. Joly stated that he wanted the architects to follow a transitional look and that the design will have a transitional feel for the corridor.

Mr. Arena asked if sprinklers would be proposed in the covered parking area. Mr. Joly stated that it was mentioned during the Development Review Team Meeting and is being considered.



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Ms. Clish asked if electric vehicle charging will be provided on site and Mr. Joly confirmed.

Mr. MacNichol said that an engineering memo will be drafted but there are some drainage concerns within the parking area, understanding that the area should be discharged to the sanitary sewer. He added that the utility rooms need to be shown on the plans and calculations for floor area ratio should be worked out and additional considerations for commercial parking and landscaping calculations should be made. He added that the applicant may consider making the bituminous sidewalk a concrete sidewalk and street trees should be considered as well as connectivity to amenities and the downtown depot area. Mr. MacNichol reviewed the Business-A zoning designation of the property and stated that the parcel is not directly abutting a residential zone.

Mr. Armstrong asked what the applicant is planning to do next with their application. Mr. Joly stated that they plan to review the comments and feedback provided by the Development Review Team and make necessary changes.

Mr. Weston opened for public comment.

Tony D'Arezzo, 130 John Street, said that the parking calculations are based on the upper level of 771 square feet, but the applicant is using the 1,300 square feet of the basement to meet the 17.16% commercial density. He stated that if the basement is included in the parking requirements, then another five or six spaces are needed. Mr. D'Arezzo asked where the loading zone is proposed. Mr. Joly said that the basement will be used for storage capacity. Mr. MacNichol clarified that there is a loading zone in the garage. Mr. McGrail said that the applicant team will work through parking issues with staff and that the board can waive commercial space requirements and parking.

Ms. Clish made a motion to continue the public hearing for a Special Permit and Site Plan Review for Mixed-Use, 346-348 Main Street, Park Realty Trust to Monday November 4, 2024. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it was approved 4-0-0. (Weston, Arena, Armstrong, Clish)

Continued Public Hearing, Definitive Subdivision Application - 0 Harold Ave (a.k.a 0 Van Norden Rd), Zero Harold Avenue, LLC

Application Continued to Monday November 4, 2024 at the request of the applicant

Ms. Clish made a motion to continue the public hearing for the definitive subdivision application at 0 Harold Ave (a.k.a 0 Van Norden Rd), Zero Harold Avenue LLC. Mr. Weston seconded the motion, and it was approved 4-0-0 (Weston, Arena, Armstrong, Clish).

Continued Public Hearing, Zoning Bylaw Amendments for November 2024 Town Meeting, in relation to M.G.L Section 3A (a.k.a MBTA Communities Act)

Mr. Weston said that at the prior CPDC meeting the board recommended seeking clarification from the town moderator, who informed the board that two separate articles and motions would go to Town Meeting. He stated that the articles are on the warrant as two motions so there is no concern for reconsideration.

Ms. Mateev asked which article will be presented first and Mr. MacNichol said that this is up for discussion. Mr. MacNichol added that the Main Street plus Downtown bylaw is Article 16, and the Downtown plus A80 is Article 17, and items may be taken out of order but this would be up to the moderator.



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Mr. Arena said that the order implies a certain processing of the articles and asked if there is a way to present the two articles with more context for awareness and comprehension.

The board further discussed the procedure of presenting the articles at Town Meeting.

Ms. Clish proposed holding meetings for town meeting members in advance of the town meeting dates. Mr. MacNichol said that the town is scheduling those meetings and conducting outreach.

Mr. Arena asked about off-street parking in the A-80 proposal which changes parking requirements from per bedroom to per unit and if this has an impact. Mr. MacNichol said that parking to date requires 1.25 spaces per unit and on average provide 1.3 spaces utilizing about 1.2 in their daily rates, he added that three-bedroom units are less common. The board continued to discuss parking requirements.

The board reviewed the A-80 proposal and Mr. Weston said it is expected to generate almost 1,900 units. Mr. MacNichol said that there are ways to reduce the unit capacity to make it closer to minimal compliance.

Mr. D'Arezzo said that the parcels included in this proposal score less than 6 out of 100 on the MAPC suitability scale and he doubts that the state would approve a plan that uses these lots.

Mr. MacNichol said that the density could be reduced for the A-80 expansion areas. Mr. Weston said that his concern about this concept is that it is known as the paper compliance option and the density per lot should be closer to what exists today. Ms. Clish agreed that the proposals have both been presented as minimal compliance. Mr. MacNichol said that the Downtown density could be reduced. The board directed planning staff to reduce the density as much as possible while remaining compliant.

Mr. Arena asked about the minimum lot size downtown and Mr. MacNichol said that there is a 6,000 sf minimum lot size and that reducing this to 5,000 sf would make a few more parcels developable. Ms. Clish said that she is reluctant to reduce the minimum lot size out of public transparency.

Mr. MacNichol reviewed the additional proposed changes, including a street tree payment in lieu of planting trees which would be dedicated to open space. Ms. Mateev said that this would likely be supported by the community. Mr. Weston said that the location of trees can be negotiated during site plan review. Mr. Arena asked if \$750 payment is proportional to the actual cost of a tree and Mr. Weston responded that it is likely closer to \$1,000. Mr. MacNichol said that \$750 is in the realm of what can be justified.

The board reviewed the Main Street Business-D proposal and Mr. MacNichol stated that everything is as previously discussed.

Carlo Bacci, 494 Main Street, advocated for reducing the 6,000 sf minimum lot size to 5,000 sf so that more development can occur. Mr. MacNichol informed the board that there are 14 parcels that range from 5,000 to 6,000 sf. Ms. Mateev said that they have heard from residents that they are not supportive of this.

Mr. Weston reviewed the new ADU law that will be going into effect in February which will allow Accessory Dwelling Units by right in single family residential districts. He stated that there have been questions about how this will impact the station area, and he said that it will create additional development and residential units and there is more opportunity for



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properties with more land area. Mr. Weston said that this will provide ability for smaller lots to add additional units. Mr. Arena asked if ADUs will be subject to the existing zoning controls and Mr. Weston responded yes, however, guidance has not been released yet. Mr. Armstrong asked if mobile homes would be allowed, and Mr. Weston said no. Mr. MacNichol said that ADUs are currently considered two-family units under the law but it will bring them into by-right status. The board continued to discuss ADUs. Ms. Clish said that the MBTA Communities Law is a separate initiative from the ADU law that will be going into effect.

Mr. MacNichol continued to review the BUS-D zoning proposal. The board provided comments and revisions.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked on waiver 5.6.7.7 if there should be a maximum so that no waiver can exceed a set maximum height in the future. Mr. MacNichol said that this is possible. The board had a brief discussion about setting the maximum height that could be requested through a waiver and determined that no height waivers will be granted. Mr. MacNichol continued to review the proposed bylaw.

Mr. D'Arezzo asked why there is a 13-unit limit before affordability is imposed at a rate of 12.5% when it could be imposed at 8 units. Mr. MacNichol said that 13 is the threshold that the model produced and would result in compliance. Ms. Clish stated that lowering the threshold below 13 units would disincentivize mixed use. The board had a brief discussion about open space requirements.

Mr. D'Arezzo stated that Business A does not have a maximum density for multifamily and Mr. MacNichol confirmed and stated that Business A also has a 40,000-sf minimum lot size and a 25% lot coverage.

Mr. Arena asked if the bylaw would be reduced for Town Meeting and Mr. MacNichol said that there would likely be 30 pages to review.

Mr. D'Arezzo stated that in the North Main Street area the HomeGoods parcel has a development feasibility score of over 20% while the rest are under 10%. Mr. MacNichol said that the tool Mr. D'Arezzo is referencing is the metric scoring system by MAPC. Mr. Arena asked what Winchester's parcel scores are and the board did not know. Mr. Weston said that their proposal was approved at this time but not final. Mr. D'Arezzo said that the Winchester parcels have a feasibility score of over 50%.

Mr. Armstrong made a motion to incorporate all changes discussed. Ms. Clish seconded the motion, and it was approved (4-0-0) (Arena, Armstrong, Clish, Weston).

Ms. Clish motioned to close the public hearing on the zoning bylaw amendments for Town Meeting in relation to 3A, The MBTA Communities Act. Mr. Armstrong seconded the motion, and it was approved (4-0-0) (Arena, Armstrong, Clish, Weston).

Other Business

Eastern Gateway Planning Steering Committee

Mr. MacNichol stated that staff met with the project consultants and intend to form an advisory steering committee, consisting of current board members in Town. He asked CPDC to recommend a member to join the committee and provide guidance. Mr. Arena asked who the steering committee will advise, and Mr. MacNichol said that it will be guiding the project



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management group, project consultant, working group, and the engagement and engineering subconsultants. Mr. MacNichol said that they will report to CPDC and the Select Board.

Mr. Weston said that the Town has started taking the lead on projects and advised that this initiative be community driven, with a clear volunteer group running the project. Mr. Arena stated that other boards and committees have defined roles and report to an elected committee, allowing residents to appeal and disagree. The board continued to discuss the purpose of the steering committee. Mr. MacNichol said that the steering committee could be expanded through resident volunteer applications. Ms. Clish suggested that staff define where the idea for the project came from, who the committee is advising, and what will happen with the results.

Mr. MacNichol said that Mr. Manganiello was interested in participating as a representative of CPDC. Mr. Armstrong also expressed interest. Mr. MacNichol stated that the result of the project will be land use policy and zoning recommendations.

Review of Meeting Minutes

The Commission reviewed the minutes for August 26 and September 9, 2024. Ms. Clish made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Weston seconded the motion, and it was approved 4-0-0 (Clish, Weston, Armstrong, Arena).

The board briefly discussed the opening of the Maillet Sommes and Morgan Conservation Area. They closed by discussing the presentation of the warrant articles for MBTA Communities at Town Meeting.

Adjournment

Ms. Clish made a motion to adjourn at 9:45 PM, and it was seconded by Mr. Weston. It was approved 4-0-0 (Clish, Weston, Armstrong, Arena).

Documents Reviewed at the Meeting:

- 346-348 Main Street
 - Architectural Plans, dated 8/30/24
 - Trip Generation letter, dated 9/10/24
 - Site Plan Set, dated 8/29/24
 - O&M Manual, dated 8/29/24
 - Stormwater Management Report, dated 8/29/24
 - Development Review Team Meeting Notes, dated 10/2/24
 - Staff Reports, dated 10/1/24
 - Notice of Public Hearing, dated 10/7/24
- MBTA Communities
 - Updated Draft A-80 Expansion Bylaw, dated 10/3/24
 - Updated Draft BUS-D DSGD Bylaw, dated 10/3/24
 - Compliance Model Analysis Results, dated 9/25/24
- Eastern Gateway
 - Steering Committee Role Description, dated 10/3/24
- Draft Minutes
 - 8/26/24 and 9/9/24