



**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
PLANNING BOARD OF THE CITY OF WORCESTER**

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

Worcester City Hall – Levi Lincoln Chamber,
with remote participation options available via WebEx online at
<https://cow.webex.com/meet/planningboardwebex> and
call-in number 1-844-621-3956 (Access Code: 2633 685 5101).

Board Members Present: Albert LaValley, Chair
Edward Moynihan, Vice Chair
Adrian Angus (*Participated Remotely*)
Conor McCormack
Brandon King (*Participated Remotely*)

Board Members Absent:

Staff Present: Michelle Smith, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Rose Russell, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Olivia Holden, Division of Planning & Regulatory Services (DPRS)
Sean Quinlivan, Department of Public Works & Parks (DPW&P) (*Participated Remotely*)

Call to Order

Board Chair Albert LaValley called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Mr. LaValley read requests for continuances, postponements, and withdrawals into the record.

**Item 1: 24 Simone Street (aka 70-72, 74-76 Valmor Street & 21-23, 25-27 Maranda Street) (PB-2023-096) –
Definitive Site Plan**

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to February 28, 2024
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to March 21, 2024

**Item 2: Brookline Street Subdivision aka 175 & 177-192 Brookline Street (PB-2023-097) – Definitive
Subdivision Amendment Plan – Extension of Time**

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to February 28, 2024
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to March 21, 2024

Item 3: 0 Myrick Avenue (PB-2024-004) – Definitive Site Plan & 81-G Street Opening Plan

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to February 28, 2024
Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to March 21, 2024

Item 6: Powers Court ±260 feet South (ST-2023-011) – Discontinue and Remove a Private Way from the Official Map

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to February 28, 2024

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to March 21, 2024

Item 7A: 57 Mount Avenue (AN-2023-056) – Approval Not Required Plan

Request to Postpone the Public Hearing to February 28, 2024

Extend the Constructive Grant Deadline to March 21, 2024

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to grant the postponements.

New Business:

4. 37 & 60 Great Brook Valley Avenue, 67 & 69 Tacoma Street, a portion of 180 Constitution Avenue, Great Brook Valley Avenue & Brookview Drive (PB-2024-005)

- a. Public Hearing – Special Permit & More than One Building on a Lot
- b. Public Meeting – Definitive Site Plan

Joshua Lee Smith, attorney on behalf of the applicant, Trinity Curtis Phase Two Limited Partnership, stated the overall intent of the project is to redevelop the Curtis Street Apartments and introduced members of the project team. Mr. Lee Smith stated this project last came before the Board in 2023 to amend Phase 1 of a 4-phase project and that the buildings that exist today were built in the 1950s and the intent is to have them all razed, removed, and rebuilt. He continued, and stated the improvements will result in greater accessibility, walkability, and drivability and will transform the site in a meaningful way. Mr. Lee Smith explained that the project is before the Board looking to roll out Phase 2 which is currently made up of single-family homes, multi-family homes, and small businesses. He continued, and stated there are 372 public housing residential units amongst the 11 outdated and inefficient buildings existing on the site at present. Mr. Lee Smith reminded the Board that Phase 1 consists of the construction of 2 four-story, multi-family buildings that will provide 129 new units and all of the existing public housing units will be replaced with new public housing units in addition to new mixed income units that will be added to introduce mixed income levels to the campus. Mr. Lee Smith concluded by stating Phase 2 introduces townhouse style homes, more public housing units, a mixed-use building to be used as an Economic Opportunity Center (EOC) which will consist of residential units on the upper floors with community rooms, common areas, offices, and a library at the lower levels, and a significant amount of open space.

Mike Lozano of Trinity Financial, stated they are within weeks of commencing construction on Phase 1 now that they have successfully relocated all the families effected by its construction. Mr. Lozano continued, and added that additional financial funding has become available through an opportunity presented by the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities to kickstart funding of Phase 2 with 19 million dollars. Mr. Lozano added that the infrastructure systems of the apartments are failing, the redevelopment of these buildings is long overdue, and the buildings will not continue to function without completely rebuilding them. Mr. Lozano concluded by stating the project proposes to rebuild utilities to modern standards as well as new streets and pedestrian facilities in addition to reconstructing the buildings.

Jessie Johnson of Weston & Sampson, engineer for the project, discussed the right-of-way improvements and the need to realign the roadway and public infrastructure to meet modern standards. Mr. Johnson continued to state that the project introduces a newly proposed right-of-way in addition to the new buildings and after going through Phase 1, the project team was able to apply the same design principles to Phase 2 and take advantage of site layout to create more access to all ends of the site. Mr. Johnson discussed the traffic improvements, pedestrian improvements, and utility improvements and explained that they have been working closely with city staff to ensure all improvements are compliant with the city standards. Mr. Johnson concluded, and stated the site has little stormwater infrastructure today and the project will bring the stormwater standards up to date to the maximum extent practicable and will result in a reduction of impervious coverage areas.

Mr. Lee Smith stated the project team agrees with most of the staff recommended conditions listed in the DPRS staff memo and the team is in agreement with all recommendations from DTM, Fire, and DPW.

Ms. Russell of DPRS stated the applicant is seeking approval to modify parking on site through a Special Permit and through Inclusionary Zoning. She explained that the applicant is entitled to a 15% and 25% parking reduction through IZ and they are seeking an additional 10% reduction through the density bonus incentive for Transportation Management Plan and advised the Board that any additional parking relief beyond 50% would need to be approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Ms. Russell continued and stated the project is also seeking to increase the number of allowed compact spaces through the special permit. She described the specific relief the applicant is seeking through the special permit on each lot and stated the project is also looking to increase the amount of impervious surface allowed on site by 3.6%, to modify the number of interior trees due to requirements being imposed by National Grid, to reduce the number of loading spaces from 2 spaces to 1 space per multi-family building, and to reduce the size of parking spaces on lot 5 through the special permit. For additional context, Ms. Russell added that the applicant is also seeking to make roadway improvements as part of the project as a whole and said improvements will be under DPW review and will have to be accepted or rejected by City Council.

Ms. Russell continued, stating that in addition to the special permit, the applicant is also seeking More Than One Building on a Lot approval and Definitive Site Plan approval and is also going before the ZBA and the Conservation Commission. She explained that 150 units are to be built in Phase 2 and they are providing approximately 1.3 parking spaces per unit in addition to a significant amount of on-street parking that is utilized today but cannot be counted in their parking totals. Ms. Russell asked the applicant to speak about the architecture on site and the cohesive feel of the site as a whole and added that the architectural plans conflicted with the site plans and asked if they're proposing basements and access on the side of the townhouse style units. Ms. Russell also asked for the applicant to comment on interior bicycle parking, in-unit laundry, and amenities offered to the residents.

Brett Stia of DHK Architects, participating remotely, described how many interior bicycle spaces they are providing for each of the buildings, totaling up to 24 spaces.

Mr. LaValley asked if the bike spaces are utilized with respect to projects of this nature; Mr. Lozano stated they do find they are utilized.

Mr. Lozano stated the townhouses will have partial basements and will be built to passive house standards with exceptional energy efficiency, including geothermal heating systems, which will not require them to dedicate so much space for HVAC systems. He continued, stating all the project's phases and buildings cohesively create access for all of the amenities throughout the campus, including the splash pad and the outdoor amenities that

were created as part of Phase 1. Mr. Lozano added that the interior community facilities such as the community rooms, the lounge space, the EOC, and the library, accommodates many amenities for the residents. Lastly, Mr. Lozano stated there will be common laundry facilities on each floor of the multi-family buildings with more than enough machines available for the residents and the accessible units will have in-unit laundry.

Mr. Stia clarified that the basements were minimized for the purpose of connecting utilities and the geothermal systems and aren't intended to be useful in any other manner. He added that access for the basements will be provided by passthrough lobbies in the multi-family buildings and the townhouses will all have rear doors opening onto patios.

Ms. Smith of DPRS asked the applicant to elaborate on the Economic Opportunity Center and how a resident would access the amenities in the building without going outside, if there is a way to provide a through connection on building 2H to connect the building to the open space area, if the dumpsters could be relocated, how the waste is managed, and how the on-street parking is managed for the folks living there and utilizing these spaces.

Mr. Lozano stated the lobby and access will be designed so the residents can access the amenities but security and management aspects still need to be developed. Mr. Lozano continued and stated the team can try to provide a passthrough lobby in building 2H but can't guarantee they'll be able to redesign their plans to accommodate it. He added that trash management will be handled by trash chutes and compactors in the larger buildings and trash management for the townhouse units will be provided through landscaped dumpster enclosures that will be monitored by staff to ensure they aren't overflowing. He continued, stating management will be on site 24/7 to manage all aspects of the property, including parking, and added that an analysis has been done and the car ownership on site today is in line with the proposed parking.

Sean Quinlivan of DPW read the DPW recommended conditions of approval and stated the team has been proactive to work with DPW staff and that DPW supports the project.

No public comment.

Mr. Lee Smith asked for a revision of DPRS recommended condition 1q; Ms. Smith recommended revising condition 1q to "incorporate a northwestern exit to Great Brook Valley Avenue for residents of building 2H, if feasible without decreasing the number of units".

Mr. Lee Smith asked for a revision of DPRS recommended condition A pertaining to Lot 3 for a community garden; Mr. Lozano stated community garden was provided as part of Phase 1 and feels it's more than enough; Ms. Smith stated this is only a recommendation and staff is okay with striking that condition.

Mr. Lee Smith stated, in regard to DPRS' recommended condition E, the limit of the project work is shown on the layout drawings and no other work is to be done beyond that so they can show the extension of the work as it exists today but would like the phrase "to be replaced in kind" to be removed from the condition. Ms. Smith stated it's a small area to be left over and staff was surprised they did not include it to be resurfaced given how small it is and wanted to be sure that this was included if funds allowed for it so they would not need to amend the approval at a later date.

Mr. Lozano stated he agrees but the issue is that it's on the property line and the adjacent property is controlled by HUD which sets another level of survey circumstances.

Ms. Smith asked the team if they'd prefer to strike the condition or if they'd like to revise it to read "in coordination with the other property owner"; Mr. Lozano stated they are fine with revising the condition to "if possible, in coordination with the other property owner".

Regarding DPRS recommended condition 1d, Mr. Lee Smith stated the project is providing 20% EV spaces throughout Phase 1 and Phase 2, explaining that Phase 1 included 32 in phases and Phase 2 included 36 spaces for a total of 68 spaces out of the total 327 spaces and they are not providing any EV spaces on the EOC lot; Ms. Smith stated it's her understanding that the EV spaces need to be on one lot to meet stretch code requirements so it would be important to provide those spaces on all lots as required by the stretch code.

Kevin McCarthy of Trinity Financial, participating remotely, stated they are required to provide the infrastructure for EV spaces and it was an oversight that it was not included in the proposal.

Board Discussion:

Mr. McCormack stated he does not have many comments on the site plan itself and feels staff has been through the application and recommended appropriate conditions. In terms of the special permit, he does not have any concerns and feels it seems reasonable for the context of the project.

Mr. Moynihan asked the applicant to speak on how many existing units are in this phase and how many units are being replaced or built; Mr. Lozano stated there are 114 existing public housing units and an outdated maintenance space. He continued, stating they are building 116 new public housing units and providing an additional 30 units at 60-80% AMI to introduce a diversity of income levels on site and at project completion, 372 units will be replaced with 512 units overall.

Mr. Moynihan asked if they would have a single maintenance facility to serve all the units; Mr. Lozano stated they would.

Mr. King stated this is a great project for the city and is happy to support.

Mr. Angus stated he is impressed by the project and agrees the infrastructure needs to be replaced and is happy to support.

Mr. LaValley stated he is also in support and happy to see this go forward.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack; the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack; the Board voted 5-0 to approve the Special Permit, the More than One Building on a Lot Plan, and the Definitive Site Plan with DPRS, DPW, and DTM recommended conditions of approval and waivers, modifying condition 1d to reflect a minimum of 20% EV ready spaces on each lot as required by stretch code, condition Q under lot 2 to incorporate "if feasible without decreasing the number of units", condition E under lot 4 to add "if possible in coordination with the property owner."

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Definitive Site Plan Application; filed 01/04/2024; prepared by Joshua Lee Smith

Exhibit B: Site Plans; dated 09/6/2023; prepared by Weston & Sampson

Exhibit C: Architectural Renderings & Elevations; dated 1/23/2024; prepared by DHK Architects Inc.

Exhibit D: Traffic Memorandum; dated 1/4/2024; prepared by Weston & Sampson

Exhibit E: Transportation Management Plan; dated 1/30/2024; prepared by Weston & Sampson
Exhibit F: Stormwater Report; dated 1/4/2024; prepared by Weston & Sampson
Exhibit G: DPW&P Cosignatory Letter; dated 2/2/2024; signed by Commissioner Jay Fink

5. 342 West Boylston Street (ZA-2024-001)
a. Public Hearing – Zoning Map Amendment

Mark Borenstein, attorney on behalf of the petitioner, 342 West Boylston, LLC, presented a video presentation to the Board. Through the video presentation, Mr. Borenstein stated the property to be rezoned is entirely within the BL-1.0 zoning district and the petitioner is looking to amend the zoning map to establish the CCOD-E overlay district to encompass the property in order to be able to construct a high-rise, multi-family condominium structure which would otherwise be prohibited in the BL-1.0 district. He continued, stating the units will be affordable units and establishing the CCOD-E in this location is in line with the Worcester Now | Next Citywide Plan which intends to establish this portion of West Boylston Street as a transformative growth area. Mr. Borenstein concluded by stating neighbors were notified of the proposed zoning map amendment and the project team did not hear anything from them.

Ms. Smith of DPRS stated the applicant has petitioned to change the zoning by adding the CCOD-E overlay district to this location. She explained that the intent of the CCOD is to establish less auto centric areas and more pedestrian friendly areas. Ms. Smith continued, elaborating that the location is proposed as part of Worcester Now | Next to be a transformative/moderate growth area and establishing the CCOD in this location is in line with the Now | Next goals. She described the area which currently consists of retail, banking service, food service, and residential uses and stated the city does not have any records of prior zoning relief in this area. Ms. Smith concluded, stating that immediately to the right of this lot is an RG-5 zoning district which allows multi-family high-rise structures by right and establishing this change adds flexibility for what otherwise would not be allowed in its current zoning.

No public comment.

Board Discussion:

Mr. Moynihan stated this is along a transit line and will be good for the area and intends to favorably support this rezoning.

Mr. McCormack agreed with Mr. Moynihan's comments and feels it reflects the goals of the Now | Next plan in eliminating the auto eccentric uses and increasing homeownership opportunities.

Mr. King and Mr. Angus echoed the comments of the other Board members.

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack; the Board voted 5-0 to close the public hearing

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack; the Board voted 5-0 to recommend in favor of the proposed amendment.

List of Exhibits:

Exhibit A: Petition – Mark Borenstein; referred to Planning Board on 1/9/2024
Exhibit B: Map of Proposed CCOD-E district at 342 West Boylston Street

Other Business

7. Approval Not Required (ANR) Plans

- a. AN-2023-056 – 57 Mount Avenue (Public) *Not properly before the Board*
- b. AN-2024-007 – 23 Lorenzo Street (Private)

Ms. Russell of DPRS described the ANRs before the Board.

On a motion Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted 5-0 to endorse the ANR for item 7b.

8. Board Policy and Procedures

No discussion

9. Communications

- a. Update on Community Preservation Committee and Community Preservation Act.

Mr. Moynihan stated community preservation bills went out and will be put on the regular tax bill in May or August. He explained that the charge is 1.5% and the revenue estimated will be around 4.5 million dollars every year with a limited match from the state which will vary every year for a total estimated benefit of 5.5 to 6 million yearly. Mr. Moynihan continued, stating the community preservation funds can be spent on historic preservation, open space, and housing and they are required by law to spend a minimum of 10% on each area of interest. He added that plans are in the works for distributing the funds with intentions to begin spending in 2025. Mr. Moynihan concluded, explain that they are not required to spend the full amount every year and funds can be used as leverage to help projects in need of more funding.

Ms. Smith added clarity on how funds are allocated.

10. Approval of Minutes - ~~7/26/2023; 11/1/2023; 11/22/2023; 1/24/2024; 1/31/2024~~

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan seconded by Mr. McCormack; the Board voted 4-0 to approve the minutes from the 1/24/2024 meeting. Mr. King abstained from the vote.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Moynihan, seconded by Mr. McCormack, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:17pm.