



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

March 31, 2022, at 7:15 PM

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
2 Anna Tesmenitsky
3 Deepa Venkat
4 Marcelo Arjona
5
6 Absent: Lakshmi Krishnan, Clerk
7 Kevin McClean
8
9 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
10 Emma Snellings, Asst. Town Planner
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12

Call to Order

14 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm. Ms. Kendall explained that per the Ashland
15 Board of Health and the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) recommendation the meeting is being
16 held remotely via Zoom, and recorded by WACA TV for broadcast at a later time. Ms. Kendall
17 reviewed the meeting agenda. She also mentioned that tonight's Inclusionary Zoning hearing would
18 take place after 9:00 pm.
19

100 Fountain Street Preliminary Subdivision

21 Ms. Kendall announced that the public hearing will be continued until April 14, 2022, to allow time
22 for the Conservation Commission to weigh in. Mr. Matchak displayed an email requesting a
23 continuance sent by Joseph Marquedant, from JD Marquedant & Associates and stamped by the
24 Town Clerk Tara Ward.
25

26 Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to continue the 100 Fountain St preliminary subdivision public
27 hearing until April 14, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arjona; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-
28 aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.
29

Continued Public Hearing - 311 Pleasant Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from March 3, 2022, meeting

32 Nathan Collins, from CLC Designs, reviewed the cross-section a member requested following the
33 board's site visit. He explained that at the street and front of the building the elevation is
34 approximately 200 ft. and slopes down to about 193 ft. at the rear of the building. The height of the
35 solar canopies ranges between 15 ft. and 20 ft. above grade from the rear to the front of the
36 structures.

37
38 Daniel Serber, from Next Grid, Inc., explained that operational landscaping crews that handle all of
39 their properties, will care for the vegetative buffer maintenance.

40
41 Ms. Kendall noted that this hearing requires a supermajority vote of 4 out of 5 members of the board,
42 and this evening only 4 members were in attendance. Therefore, she recommended closing the
43 public hearing and continuing the discussion of the project relative to the Special Permit and Site
44 Plan criteria and conditions.

45
46 Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to close the 311 Pleasant St. public hearing. The motion was
47 seconded by Mr. Arjona; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of
48 4-0-0.

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50 The members reviewed and discussed each of the Special Permit criteria and felt the project had no
51 impact or negative effect on criteria 1-3 and 6. Regarding criteria 4, impact on the neighborhood
52 character and social structure, and 5, the impact on the natural environment, the members discussed
53 that although it is a relatively small undertaking, it has a potential impact on the views from the
54 Riverwalk, Marathon Park, and the abutting residential properties, and therefore they hesitated to
55 approve the project at this time, and have it set a precedent.

56
57 The members also reviewed the Site Plan conditions 1 through 12, and felt they were either not
58 applicable, or not impacted by the project.

59
60 Mr. Arjona made a motion to continue the 311 Pleasant St. discussion until April 14, 2022. The
61 motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-
62 aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

63
64 **100 Chestnut Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from February 10, 2022,**
65 **meeting**

66 Ms. Kendall reopened the hearing. Mr. Matchak explained that the project at 100 Chestnut St. is for
67 the development of Phase 7, the last phase of the Village of the Americas.

68
69 Roy MacDowell, from Baystone Development, reviewed their revised renderings and the location of
70 the dog park that he noted is well outside of the wetlands.

71
72 Matt Marotta, from ICON Architecture, reviewed the architectural design presented at the last meeting
73 and said there have not been significant changes to the entrance, commercial space, or the buildings’
74 design and mass.

75
76 Todd MacDowell went over the updated traffic and Parking Analysis provided by MDM
77 Transportation dated March 24, 2022, that looked at the effects of traffic generation of the updated
78 proposal compared to the original proposal. The current proposal increased commercial space from
79 4,200 sq. ft to 10,500 sq. ft. and decreased the number of residential units from 200 to 174. Todd
80 MacDowell reviewed the weekday morning and evening trip generation that was slightly higher due to
81 the increased commercial space. He also reviewed parking demand for the site. Residential parking
82 demand is expected to be highest during overnight hours, and commercial demand in the morning and

83 throughout the day, however, more parking space will be provided than the anticipated demand. He
84 concluded that the trip characteristics of the proposed development provided no material difference
85 from the traffic analysis results originally provided.

86

87 The members asked for more information and the technical reasons preventing the entrance from
88 Chestnut St. from shifting to line up with the public way and pedestrian traffic.

89
90 MDM recommended discussing the option to reduce the number of parking areas to lessen the paving
91 in favor of landscaped spaces. The members asked how the additional space could help mitigate the
92 other issues that have been discussed while supporting the intent of the Wildwood District. The
93 members also asked for renderings that show the relationship between the site and the condominiums
94 and the views from the surrounding streets. They also discussed exploring the connectivity with the
95 Upper Charles Trail crosswalk.

96
97 Roy MacDowell indicated that they would look into changing the building's architecture and the retail
98 layout to improve the entrance alignment with the courtyard. They also agreed to look into the Upper
99 Charles Trail crosswalk.

100

101 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments.

102

103 Rob Scherer, a member of the Select Board and the Upper Charles Trail Committee spoke as an
104 individual expressed his support for incorporating bicycle access and storage, MWRTA bus stops, and
105 trail access from the development to the High School.

106

107 Julie Nardone, 86 Elliott St., suggested incorporating an elevated walkway.

108

109 Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to continue the 100 Chestnut St. public hearing until April 14,
110 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arjona; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and
111 Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

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113 **Continued Public Hearing – 400 Cedar Street Special Permit Modification – Continued from**
114 **March 3, 2022, meeting**

115 Ms. Kendall reopened the hearing. Mr. Matchak explained that the project at 400 Cedar is for
116 Special Permit modification application submitted by Verizon Wireless for approval to modify
117 existing Verizon Wireless antennas mounted on the Ashland water tank.

118

119 Michael Giaimo, the attorney representing Verizon Wireless, appeared to answer any questions from
120 the board.

121

122 Mr. Arjona made a motion to close the 400 Cedar St. Special Permit modification public hearing.
123 The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and
124 Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

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126 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the 400 Cedar St. Special Permit modification. The motion
127 was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye;
128 with a vote of 4-0-0

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Public Hearing – Inclusionary Housing Bylaw Amendment

Ms. Kendall opened the hearing and read the public notice concerning the proposed zoning amendment.

Brandi Kinsman, a Select Board member, and a member of the Housing Production Steering Committee explained that adopting an Inclusionary Housing Bylaw was one of the committee’s priorities in order to increase the town’s affordable housing stock. She reviewed the process the committee followed to determine three options that addressed maximizing the number of units at 80% area median income (AMI), deepening the affordability at 60% AMI, and a hybrid of options 1 and 2. The options were presented to the community in a survey and the majority were in favor of the hybrid proposal. Ms. Kinsman asked that the Planning Board vote to move the proposed bylaw to Town Meeting.

The members discussed the inclusionary housing models adopted in other states and communities in Massachusetts but felt some models are community-specific and not easily transferable. They also reviewed the following components included in the general requirements of the proposed bylaw, such as the new bylaw states that it applies to any development that produces 6 or more dwelling units. For development with 6 to 19 units, 12% must be affordable, and for projects with 20 or more units 15% must be affordable. For multifamily projects, half of the required affordable housing units must be affordable for households at or below 60% AMI, and half affordable for households with incomes at or below 80% AMI. Ms. Kendall explained the density bonus that will apply to the 10% affordable housing stock and the parking reduction the Planning Board members changed from 25% to 10%, and up to 15% if deemed appropriate. Ms. Kendall explained the compliance methods, such as the units must be provided onsite, or a cash payment in lieu of for smaller developments made to the Affordable Housing Trust for future affordable projects.

The members discussed other public and private options to address affordability, and whether the proposal that is focused on the densest multifamily elements is the best approach for Ashland. However, Ms. Kinsman responded that inclusionary zoning is not intended to increase density but to provide a net neutral way for developers to create affordable housing without requiring the community to pay for it. The members also discussed the town’s overall affordability “tool kit” that includes buildings with as few as two units, accessory dwellings, small lots, and investment in affordable units through the Affordable Housing Trust. They also discussed risks that may come with inclusionary zoning in terms of small decreases in production and a slight increase in the price of single-family housing.

Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments.

Mark Dassoni, 49 Hawthorne Ln., asked whether the proposed bylaw would affect conditions and technical aspects of existing zoning, such as the number of bedrooms in unit in the Wildwood District.

Carmilo Espitia, was in favor of dense multifamily developments and commented on a lesser demand for parking.

175 Julie Nardone felt the warrant article was too complex to include in the upcoming Town Meeting
176 and was not in favor of dense developments.
177
178 Joan Gonfrade agreed with the 12% affordable housing and was not in favor of high-rise dense
179 developments. She also asked how the proposal’s requirements affect existing zoning. Mr. Matchak
180 responded that there would be no effect on existing projects.
181
182 Catherine Jurczyk, 11 Rodman Rd., felt the proposal has too many loopholes that may result in
183 disappointments. She was not in favor of moving the bylaw to the upcoming Town Meeting.
184
185 Janet Platt, 11 Rodman Rd., asked for more information regarding Section 7.8.6-2 Offsite
186 Replacement option, and was also concerned about Section 7.8.6-3 and potential loopholes in the
187 bylaw.
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189 Rob Scherer, 41 Bay Colony Dr., expressed his reservations concerning the bylaw, such as strategic
190 placement of developments and increased density.
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192 Regarding edits to the proposal, the members raised concern regarding the 25% reduction in the
193 parking requirement and asked the board to vote on the edit to reduce the requirement to 10%.
194
195 Ms. Kinsman clarified the reduction of the payment in lieu of up to two units. The member asked
196 for more information about the calculation of the payment, and additional time to discuss the density
197 bonus and other edits.
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199 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the discussion until Monday, April 4, 2022, during the
200 multi-board meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
201 Arjona-aye, and Kendall–aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

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203 ***Report from Board Members and Town Planner***

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205 **Update: Letter Regarding Comprehensive Plan for Select Board**

206 Mr. Matchak said distributed the updated Comprehensive Plan to the members that included Ms.
207 Kendall’s edits and the proposed process.
208

209 Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to send the draft date March 17, 2022, with Ms. Kendall’s edits to
210 the Select Board, date it March 31, 2022, and include the proposed process attachment. The motion
211 was seconded by Mr. Arjona; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall–aye; with a
212 vote of 4-0-0.
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214 ***Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings***

215 **Applications received**

216 Mr. Matchak reported on two new applications the Planning Office received: from Eversource, and
217 from the Boxing Gym
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219 **Future Retreat Date**

220 No new update.

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Inclusionary Housing/Affordable Housing Multi-Board Meeting update

The meeting is scheduled for April 4, 2022, at 7:00 pm.

Discussion and appointment of Kevin Mowatt to the Design Review Committee

Ms. Kendall explained that Kevin Mowatt has applied for the second Design Review Committee associate seat.

Mr. Mowatt introduced himself and explained that he has been employed as an architect since 2010 and a registered architect in Massachusetts since 2015. He has experience in housing and hotel projects. Mr. Mowatt noted that he moved to Ashland about one year ago.

Ms. Kendall disclosed that she connected with Mr. Mowatt during her search for architects to join a town board or committee.

Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to approve Kevin Mowatt for an associate position on the Design Review Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Arjona; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the minutes of March 3, 2022, was postponed.

Adjournment

Ms. Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.