



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes Remote via Zoom Video Conferencing

April 14, 2022, at 7:15 PM

1 Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
2 Lakshmi Krishnan, Clerk
3 Anna Tesmenitsky
4 Deepa Venkat
5 Kevin McClean
6
7 Absent: Marcelo Arjona
8
9 Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner
10 Emma Snellings, Asst. Town Planner
11

12 *Call to Order*

13 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order at 7:17 pm. Ms. Kendall explained that Marcelo Arjona
14 would not be in attendance this evening and associate member Kevin McClean would sit in for him.
15
16

17 Ms. Kendall noted that the Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw Amendment would not be discussed, and the
18 only action on that item tonight will be to close the hearing, as it has been taken off of the warrant
19 for Town Meeting.
20

21 **311 Pleasant Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from March 31, 2022,** 22 **meeting**

23 Ms. Kendall said that no additional public comments would be taken on the 311 Pleasant Street
24 Special Permit and Site Plan Review, as the hearing is closed. Mr. Matchak reported that a letter
25 was received from the attorney representing the applicant. Mr. Collins, from CLC Designs, was in
26 attendance to answer questions concerning that correspondence.
27

28 The members agreed that the project fell under the Special Permit criteria, as discussed at the
29 previous meeting. Mr. Collins indicated that the applicant would request a written letter from Town
30 Counsel concerning why the Special Permit criteria applied.
31

32 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the 311 Pleasant St. Special Permit. The motion was
33 seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-nay, McClean-aye, and
34 Kendall-nay; with a vote of 3-2-0.
35

36 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the 311 Pleasant St. Site Plan Review. The motion was
37 seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky- nay, McClean-aye, and
38 Kendall- nay; with a vote of 3-2-0.

39
40 Ms. Kendall explained that the motion for the Special Permit required a supermajority vote, and
41 therefore failed to pass. Mr. Matchak said he would draft the decision, make it available for the
42 members' signatures, and file it with the Town Clerk within fourteen days.
43
44 **400 Cedar Street Special Permit Modification – Continued from March 31, 2022, meeting**
45 Ms. Kendall explained that the cellular tower modification project was approved at the last meeting,
46 and the next step is to accept the draft decision.
47
48 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the cellular tower modification at 400 Cedar St. decision, as
49 drafted. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-
50 yes, McClean-abstained, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 4-0-1.
51
52
53 **100 Fountain Street Preliminary Subdivision**
54 Ms. Kendall reported that the Conservation Agent Rebecca Solomon provided feedback from the
55 Conservation Commission (ConCom) meeting held on Monday when the 100 Fountain St.
56 Preliminary Subdivision was on the agenda. Ms. Kendall mentioned that she attended the ConCom
57 meeting and felt the summary reflected what was discussed.
58
59 Regarding the work that will be required to address the site's grading issue, the groundwater runoff,
60 and emergency vehicle access, Joe Marquedant, from JD Marquedant & Associates, indicated that
61 all of those concerns will be vetted. However, he asked for the board's feedback regarding the
62 common drive concept.
63
64 Preston Crow, 41 Rockwood, spoke on his own behalf and not as a member of the ConCom. He
65 questioned the legal bearings of changing the upper two lots' frontage from being linked to a paper
66 road to the proposed shared driveway. Mr. Marquedant responded that the road has been
67 established, and they wish to build a road that is more appropriate for the use.
68
69 Peter Tessicini, an abutter from 9 Upland Rd., asked whether Ballard Rd. will be titled Ballard Ln.
70 and whether the plan includes sidewalks.
71
72 Roberta Tessicini, 9 Upland Rd., commented on the existing ponding groundwater adjacent to her
73 property. She asked how the project will handle the groundwater, and for a hydrology study.
74
75 Dan Lee, 20 Upland Rd., asked about the logistics of the Preliminary Subdivision approval process.
76 Mr. Matchak provided a brief clarification and noted that a Preliminary Subdivision is not legally
77 binding. Mr. Lee questioned an emergency easement from 23 Upland Rd. and the formerly
78 proposed Outlook Common development.
79
80 Ms. Kendall made a motion to close the 100 Fountain St Preliminary Subdivision public hearing.
81 The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
82 McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
83

84 The members discussed the open issues that needed to be addressed and therefore included in the
85 decision, such as the stormwater, the Fisk Road Development, the steepness of the site, a request for
86 a hydrology study, and problems with how the existing houses were built that may need to be
87 corrected.
88

89 Ms. Tesmenitsky made a motion to approve the 100 Fountain St Preliminary Subdivision, based on
90 the input received from the Conservation Commission and the abutters to be included in the
91 decision. The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
92 McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.
93

94 **100 Chestnut Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from March 31, 2022,**
95 **meeting**

96 Ms. Kendall reopened the hearing. Mr. Matchak explained that the project at 100 Chestnut St. is for
97 the development of the last phase of the Village of the Americas. Mr. Matchak summarized the
98 discussion from the last meeting.
99

100 Roy MacDowell, from Baystone Development, reported that he and Todd MacDowell met with the
101 Trails Committee and conducted a site walk through the cemetery area and the potential location for a
102 crosswalk. Mr. MacDowell reviewed a presentation that summarized the proposed project details,
103 including renderings and aerial views of the site.
104

105 Matt Leidner, from Civil Design Group, reviewed the engineering feasibility of shifting the driveway
106 100 ft. north along Chestnut St. to better align with the space between the two buildings. Mr. Leidner
107 outlined his concerns with the entrance relocation, such as the steepness of the road and the driveway
108 grade, and its close proximity to the Queen Isabella Way turn lane.
109

110 Roy MacDowell reviewed four design options that positioned the driveway and courtyard in various
111 locations to address public pedestrian connectivity.
112

113 Matt Marotta, from ICON Architecture, reviewed the design elements at the rear of the building. He
114 explained the objective was to make it consistent with the rest of the building by adding wood-look
115 siding, smaller gables to break up the roofline, and changing the color of the vertical siding around the
116 balconies to white.
117

118 Todd MacDowell reviewed the proposed parking locations and an area where they could potentially
119 reduce the number of parking spaces and increase the green landscaping that could be converted back
120 to parking if necessary.
121

122 The members felt option 1 was most appealing, given the break-out of the commercial space.
123 However, they ask that the buildings' 360-degree design mimic the design of the four-unit condos in
124 the development. They also discussed options to mitigate the school bus stop safety concerns and
125 asked the applicant to propose potential solutions. They also asked for design considerations that help
126 to conceal the venting on the sides of the buildings. Concerning sustainability and green elements, the
127 members also asked the applicant to incorporate a forward-thinking model that aligns with the town's
128 NetZero goal.
129

130 Roy MacDonald asked, and Ms. Kendall responded that in regard to option 1 the board would not be
131 opposed to moving forward with the site engineering.

132
133 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments.

134
135 Mark Dassoni asked what type of commercial options would be considered for the front of the
136 building and whether commercial and medical professionals could occupy the space.

137
138 Catherine Rooney, 136 Fountain St. raised concern regarding the small tree buffer massing in
139 relationship to the size of the development and asked the applicant to consider installing engineered
140 planting basins. Ms. Rooney also asked, and the applicant responded that the site will be solar and
141 electrical vehicle (EV) Ready.

142
143 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the 100 Chestnut St. public hearing until April 28, 2022.
144 The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
145 McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

146
147 **501 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – Continued from March 17, 2022,**
148 **meeting**

149 Ms. Kendall reopened the 501 Pond St. hearing. She explained that Planning Board member Anna
150 Tesmenitsky is an abutter, and therefore has recused herself from the hearing. Kevin McClean, the
151 associate Planning Board member, will fill the fifth voting member seat.

152
153 Ian Ramey, a landscape architect from Copley Wolff Design Group, provided an updated
154 presentation on the open space and landscape design. He reviewed several options that use the
155 woonerf concept, which creates a flexible living street that blurs the vehicle spaces with commercial
156 and pedestrian amenities. The design he proposed was the curvilinear option with
157 compartmentalized programmable terrace spaces. Mr. Ramey explained that the area is curb-less
158 with bollards and planters to protect pedestrian areas. The parking spaces removed from the front
159 side of the building were added to the west side by creating a doubled-up head-in parking
160 configuration, which preserved the number of parking spaces that were previously presented. He
161 also described the paving materials, play areas, and seating flexibility.

162
163 The members expressed their backing of the design concept but felt more details were needed to
164 improve the connectivity between the front area and the remaining Site Plan. They also questioned
165 the flexible parking space idea since spaces would likely be required when the commercial
166 businesses are in full use.

167
168 Ms. Kendall commented that the project with the 120-unit count, 25% affordable, and the enhanced
169 open space concept was moving in the right direction. In terms of the managing of the open space,
170 the project team assumed that it would be operated by the building management, but said they would
171 think more about how oversight might be handled.

172
173 Several members of the public commented, including Mark Dassoni, Cathy Rooney, and Kate
174 Jurczyk. They asked about the site's traffic flow, residential assigned parking, the legal easement on
175 the northwest corner, extending the arborvitaes hedges at the rear of the site, the potential for a

176 covered bus-type shelter, the size of the development, and whether the units should be sold rather
177 than rented. Mr. Ramey responded that two-way traffic is planned, there would be no assigned
178 residential parking, and that they would explore design options for a bus stop-type shelter.

179
180 Ms. Kendall summarized the applicant's action items that resulted from tonight's discussion,
181 including further development of the open space in front of the buildings, improving the character of
182 the buildings, and enhancing the connection between the landscaping and the buildings.

183
184 Ms. Kendall made a motion to continue the 100 Chestnut St. public hearing until April 28, 2022.
185 The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall-
186 aye; with a vote of 4-0-0.

187 188 **40 Summer Street Special Permit**

189 Ms. Kendall opened the public hearing and Ms. Krishnan read the public notice.

190
191 Mr. Matchak introduced the applicant, AJ Thomas, the owner, and operator of Uppercuts Boxing
192 Club located downtown Ashland's ADD Overlay A district. Mr. Thomas is proposing a relocation
193 of Uppercuts to 40 Summer St., which is in the ADD C zoning district.

194
195 AJ Thomas introduced himself and explained that Uppercuts has been in business since 2015. He
196 explained that the relocation to 40 Summer St. will not include changes to the exterior of the
197 building, only new signage, and minimal changes to the interior. Mr. Thomas said that some
198 outdoor activities would take place in the park across the street, however, the majority of the
199 activities are indoors. Music is played indoors but not at a level that will disturb neighbors. He also
200 noted that classes begin at 5:30 am and the last class ends at 8:00 pm.

201
202 Steve Greenberg explained that Mr. Thomas has signed a long-term lease with the landlord, and
203 given the American Legion previously occupied the building, he felt Uppercuts is a good fit for the
204 site.

205
206 Mr. Matchak said he believed the existing parking area is adequate, but he would confirm the
207 adequacy of the number of spaces, given the building is 6,000 sq. ft.

208
209 Ms. Krishnan made a motion to approve the Special Permit for 40 Summer St. for the indoor
210 commercial recreational space. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye,
211 Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

212 213 **Scenic Road Permit – Cedar, Chestnut, Eliot, Main and Spring Streets**

214 Ms. Kendall opened the public hearing and Ms. Krishnan read the public notice.

215
216 Mr. Matchak explained that the permit is being sought in order to trim and prune trees to clear
217 electrical circuits.

218
219 Matthew Mitchell and Chris Gonzalaz, from Eversource, were in attendance. Mr. Mitchell explained
220 that on several scenic roads in town minor tree branches are pruned 10 ft. to the side and below, and
221 15 ft. above circuits every four years to maintain clearance, as part of Eversource's tree trimming

222 program. Mr. Matchak explained that Eversource’s tree removal program is a separate effort with
223 specific requirements to address a tree’s degraded condition, such as reporting the species, the tree’s
224 diameter, and an arborist’s report confirming the tree’s condition, etc.

225
226 Ms. Kendall made a motion to approve the Scenic Road Permit for Cedar St., Chestnut St., Elliott St.,
227 Main St., and Spring St. The motion was seconded by Ms. Krishnan; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye,
228 Tesmenitsky-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall–aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

229

230 **Inclusionary Housing Bylaw Amendment**

231 Mr. Matchak explained that although this item was discussed at the recent multi-board meeting, he
232 recommended the board vote to close the public hearing.

233

234 Ms. Kendall made a motion to close the public hearing on the Inclusionary Housing Bylaw
235 Amendment. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye,
236 Tesmenitsky-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall–aye; with a vote of 5-0-0.

237

238 The members agreed to further the discussion regarding the continued involvement in the research
239 and study of affordable housing in Ashland at an upcoming board retreat.

240

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

242

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

244 Regarding the Comprehensive Plan letter, Mr. Matchak reported that the final letter is awaiting Ms.
245 Kendall’s signature.

246

247 ***Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings***

248 Regarding 355 West Union Street Site Plan Review, Mr. Matchak asked that the members come into
249 Town Hall next week to sign the T.J.’s decision.

250

251 Regarding 100 Chestnut St., Mr. Matchak reported that he is expecting a letter from the attorney
252 representing the Fafard Co. concerning the approval not required (ANR) owned by Mr. McDowell.

253

254 Ms. Kendall noted the other remaining open items, including a further discussion concerning the
255 Comprehensive Plan, and a joint meeting with the Design Review Committee to discuss the
256 proposed bylaw changes.

257

258 **Applications received**

259 Mr. Matchak reported that Mazi’s applied for an outdoor seating permit with a tent. The hearing
260 will be scheduled for May 26, 2022, to allow time to generate a certified abutter’s list. Mr. Matchak
261 mentioned that Governor Baker signed a year-long extension for outdoor seating

262

263 **Future Retreat Date**

264 Ms. Kendall suggested the board decide on a date after the elections.

265

266 ***Adjournment***

267 Ms. Kendall made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 pm. The motion was seconded by Ms.
268 Tesmenitsky; Krishnan-aye, Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, McClean-aye, and Kendall-aye; with a
269 vote of 5-0-0.
270
271
272