



**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 7:00 pm – Zoom Meeting**

Members Present:	Heather von Mering (chair) Maureen Meister	Diab Jerius (Vice Chair, Clerk) Cheryl Wolfe
Members Absent:	Heather Hannon	
Also Present:	Brian Szekely, Town Planner Beth Rudolph, Town Engineer WinCam	Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary Bryan Manter, Asst. Town Engineer
Others Attending:	John Stevens Chris Mulhern Paul Soughley Christopher Keeler Lee Wooten Josh Fiala Andrew Ryan Grisnette Colon Brian Tremblay Larry Murray	WinCam John Suhrbier Kevin Ryan Sean Lyons Tim O'Donnell Ian Gillespie Lucy Zhang Jamie Devol MJ English Richard Leif Dennis Carlone Sam Allison Todd Morey Brendan Lyons Sarah Koury Peter Hopley Nickle Chi-Lung Cheung Ted Touloukian Jan Steenbrugge

A quorum being in attendance, Chair von Mering calls the Winchester Planning Board (PB) meeting to order at 7:01 pm, noting that the meeting is being video recorded via WinCam.

**1. North Main Street Study**

Mr. Szekely introduced the consultant for this study, Josh Fiala, Principal Planner for the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Mr. Fiala provided a presentation outlining the process, schedule, and contents, and requested PB comments. His presentation points included:

- Information gathering: existing conditions, zoning, outreach interviews.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Targeting 2/23 or 3/2 for community meeting.
- Anticipate any zoning changes will occur at the Fall Town Meeting.

PB discussion and comments:

- Recommend talking with Historical Commission, people who know zoning, and Town Meeting members whose precinct is next to or part of these parcels shown on the maps.
- Concern about managing the process with COVID.
- Concern about outreach to the community (residential and businesses).
- Concern on impacts to businesses (existing and future) and to the town, especially regarding revenue.
- Focus on building a cohesive nature and character to the district.

Mr. Fiala stated the interviews and discussions would be virtual or over the phone.

Discussion concluded with two proposed Community meetings: one in March/April with MAPC and a second in May/June discussing recommendations and any zoning changes.

## **2. 88 Harvard Street**

Chair von Mering outlined that with the new zoning that passed Fall Town Meeting, the owner of 88 Harvard Street can seek a permit to create a second lot and build on it in exchange for preserving the historic house.

Mr. Brendan Lyons indicated his current proposal is to restore the existing historic duplex, adding a small addition in the rear (at 88 Harvard Street), and either provide a similar-in-design duplex or a single-family home on the adjacent parcel, moving the property line to create two equally sized lots.

PB comments:

- The existing property needs a preservation architect to develop the plans to correctly restore the home.
- The driveway should be narrower at the street; it can widen after the apron.

Mr. Jerius moved to recommend 88 Harvard Street restore the existing duplex; and with the adjacent lot, move the lot line to create two equally sized parcels; and build a duplex on that adjacent lot, consistent with the historic neighborhood, that is of equal size, square footage, scale, and historic character of the existing house. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Hannon absent.

## **3. RFP for Swanton and Washington Streets**

Mr. Szekely noted the consultant is currently taking comments with the goal to release an RFP by the end of January or early February depending on public feedback. Three residents are reaching out to the community for comment: Stephanie Zaremba, Christa Russo, and Randal Drain.

Mr. Carlone provided design guidelines and comments:

- Design is a modified downtown standard with neighborhood context.
- Residential image on street.
- Recommend using 10% as a courtyard for the residents, providing some ground floor retail, including buffers along existing properties, and screening the parking.

Mr. Szekely confirmed that the Town does not currently own the site.

Ms. Wolfe also noted that the RFP prioritizes the design guidelines to steer the developers in their submittals.

## **4. Updates from Mr. Szekely:**

- a. The Memorandum of Understanding with LDA land developer for lease with Civico is being formed for a spring Town Meeting vote. The plan is for a 99-year lease with some mid-term opportunity for a revision. Underground parking is being incorporated. Chair von Mering noted that the train station is shut down due to unsafe conditions. The Town requested the MBTA to reconsider the station renovation and restoration. The MBTA has agreed and anticipates having construction start this summer.
- b. The Mass Economic Development Bill has \$626M targeted for COVID related and economic stimulus. With recent legislature, Town Meeting can approve zoning bylaws with a simple majority as compared to a two-thirds majority to promote the housing units needed in communities. Chair von Mering noted that properties within a half-mile radius of a train station can be multifamily units by right. This by right exists downtown now, but not at Wedgemere Station. Currently reviewing the impact on our Town at Wedgemere Station.

## **5. Public Hearing for 654 Main Street Special Permit Continued**

Chair von Mering opened the Public Hearing noting that the consultant has an update on the proposed project.

Mr. Carlone summarized his comments: the massing is the same with several redesigned details, many reflecting a change in scale; priority given to the retail floor; courtyard trees are improved; the Elmwood views have an English/European feel; the roof scape has changed; mechanical elements are out of view.

Mr. Touloukian provided a slide presentation outlining the design changes in response to the comments received from the public and PB.

PB Comments:

- The shed dormers on the residential side still do not look right.
- The corner with the balconies on Vine Street weakens that part of the design.
- The 45-degree angled wall needs attention.
- Many design elements are significantly improved.
- Request to see specific location of the housing units in relation to the permit.
- The Select Board must approve any public applications before the PB can issue a permit.
- Does the tree on the corner of Main and Elmwood impact traffic and visibility?
- Prefer to see the tower window read more like a “look out” than as shown.

Chair von Mering noted that Public Comment is still pending and wants to make sure everyone has as much information as possible before closing the comment period.

Mr. Szekely noted that the contract for the historical architect will not be activated until after the permit is received since the consultant is not needed until after construction starts. He noted that Toole’s peer review of the traffic will be available before their next meeting and that they will be attending the meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Rudolph noted that the conservation consultant, VHB, completed their peer review and most of their comments relate to the flood mitigation.

Mr. Szekely noted he has received 7 emails from different people (one representing the occupants of 666 Main Street). Most reiterate that the project is too big, concerns with parking and traffic, and requesting the buildings be set-back from the road. Mr. Carlone is reviewing and responding to these comments.

Mr. Jerius moved to continue the Public Hearing for 654 Main Street to Tuesday, January 26, 2021, at 8:30 pm. Ms. Meister second the Motion. Vote: Meister, Jerius, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Hannon absent.

#### **6. ZBA Petition No. 3914 – 138 Forest Street**

Mr. Szekely noted that this resubmitted design responds to several previous comments; however, the house remains in the same location. Ms. Rudolph noted that some technical items need to be worked out but nothing significant.

PB Comments: removed pool; now only one retaining wall; if the house is pushed back, the retaining wall gets higher.

Decision: no change in previous motion; recommend no action.

#### **7. ZBA Petition No. 3923 – 32 Lawson Road**

This is a petition to build additions closer to the front property line and closer to another building than permitted by right.

Ms. Meister moved to recommend favorable action to issue a Special Permit for Petition 3923 for 32 Lawson Road. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Hannon absent.

**8. ZBA Petition No. 3924 – 7 Winslow Road**

This is a petition to build an addition closer to the side property line than permitted by right.

Ms. Meister moved to recommend favorable action to issue a Special Permit for Petition 3924 for 7 Winslow Road with the condition that the siding be a wood material. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Hannon absent.

**9. ZBA Petition No. 3925 – 7 Grassmere Avenue**

Mr. Szekely noted this applicant filed a Notice of Intent on November 9, 2020. The current petition is to build an addition closer to the side property line than permitted by right.

Mr. Manter was introduced as the new Assistant Town Engineer. He noted that they are working with the applicant on storm water concerns.

PB Discussion: concern that the driveway is too wide at the curb cut (currently 18 feet, by right is 20 feet); concern that the addition is in the setback.

Ms. Meister moved to advise the ZBA of their concerns for Petition 3925 for 7 Grassmere Avenue: 1) the driveway curb cut should be shortened and 2) one member objects to the five-foot setback. Mr. Jerius second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe, von Mering in favor. Motion passes 4-0-0 with Hannon absent.

**10. ZBA Petition No. 3926 – 49 Church Street**

Chair von Mering recused from this petition.

The applicant is seeking an appeal for the Building Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer's determination (email dated November 18, 2020) regarding the property at 49 Church Street.

PB Discussion: several of the claims in the email need to be verified.

Ms. Meister moved to recommend two actions for Petition 3926 for 49 Church Street: residential use should be verified and hire a Registered Land Surveyor to determine the need for Site Plan Review. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe in favor. Motion passes 3-0-1 with Hannon absent and von Mering recused.

Ms. Meister moved to adjourn the PB meeting. Ms. Wolfe second the Motion. Vote: Jerius, Meister, Wolfe in favor. Motion passes 3-0-0 with Hannon and von Mering absent. Meeting adjourned at 10:32 pm.

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Diab Jerius, Clerk

Nancy Polcari, Recording Secretary