

Meeting of the Planning Board
Thursday, February 9, 2023

The 17th meeting of the Milton Planning Board for FY2023 was called to order at 7:09 p.m. in a hybrid model of in-person in Town Hall and via the Zoom virtual meeting software.

Present: Planning Board members Meredith Hall (Chair), Cheryl Tougias (Secretary), Richard Boehler (remote) and Maggie Oldfield (remote); Director of Planning and Community Development Tim Czerwienski, Assistant Town Planner Josh Ekart-Lee (remote).

Absent: Member Sean Fahy and Sr. Administrative Clerk Julia Getman.

1. Administrative Items: Approval of meeting minutes was deferred. An upcoming meeting for February 23rd and an MBTA zoning public forum for February 16th were confirmed.

Staff Update:

Mr. Czerwienski reported that affordable units had been added to the town's subsidized housing inventory from the 40Bs planned for East Milton, 648 Canton Ave., 16 Amor Rd. and 936 Brush Hill Rd. He said that the Wolcott Woods development had provided two affordable units at 92 Brush Hill Rd. and said that the affordable units for the 582 Blue Hill Ave. 40B had been removed from the inventory due to the lack of issuance of a building permit within one year of the Board of Appeals decision. He said the goal is to permit or produce 98 additional affordable units within two years in order to achieve safe harbor, but that safe harbor fluctuates in accordance with the issuing of building permits for approved projects. He mentioned the land count analysis is underway by BSC Group, and said that Milton, which has 748 units of subsidized housing, needs 946 to meet the required 10% and that units from the 40Bs at 711 Randolph Ave., 582 Blue Hill Ave., and 728 Randolph Ave. will achieve that goal. He said that a feasibility study for creating a bike path connection over an abandoned rail bridge next to 88 Wharf had been provided by the Mass Trails grant and that studies for dredging the Neponset River were underway. Mr. Ekart-Lee said that the Town had received a grant from the Community Compact Program for a greenhouse gas inventory and pathways analysis to meet state emissions reduction goals and that the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's (MAPC) Accelerating Climate Resiliency Program was working on a feasibility study for a micro grid project connecting Winter Valley, Town Hall and the police station.

2. Citizen's Speak:

Carol Stocker of 291 Hillside St., a member of the Shade Tree Advisory Committee (STAC), said that the Town's GIS mapping technician Allan Bishop had created a multi-layered map for identifying historic and scenic roads and their specific setbacks, which will help deter the illegal removal of town trees.

3. Public Hearing: 1200 Brush Hill Rd. Scenic Road Permit (cont.' from 1/12)

Attorney Edward Corcoran, Esq. identified areas on a site plan where four town-owned trees, two within the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission, had been illegally removed along with portions of a historic stone wall within the right-of-way. He said that each of the trees would be replaced with four 3" caliper trees protected by a \$2,100, two-year bond to ensure survival and provide maintenance by the property owner. He said that STAC and the tree warden agreed with the plan and discussed new tree variations. Ms. Stocker requested that the trees get watered once a week, that the "alligator bags" are removed during the winter months and that the bond last three years. Mr. Corcoran asked if a wall similar to that at Fuller Village could be approved for the site, and it was suggested that a more natural looking, mortarless wall would better match the historic esthetic of the road. The design of the entrance, lighting and signage were discussed.

Public Comment

Ms. Stocker discussed the ill effects of light pollution on wildlife and noted that the entrance abuts a natural area.

The hearing was continued to February 23rd. Mr. Corcoran said he would prepare a draft decision.

4. New Business: Approval Not Required: 400 Adams St.

Mr. Czerwienski discussed plans to move a lot line for the transfer of a 535 SF non-buildable lot, "lot B," to 392 Adams Street. Access and utilities would not be affected. Attorney Jeff Graeber, speaking on behalf of the applicant, Coleman Grealish, said that the lot had been transferred to Steven Davis on 7/18/22. Ms. Tougias made a motion to authorize Mr. Czerwienski to endorse the plan as not requiring subdivision approval, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, which passed 4/0/0.

5. Public Hearing: 440 Granite Avenue Site Plan Approval:

Attorney Marion McEttrick, representing applicant Michael Moore, discussed plans for a four-story, 26-unit mixed use development on a 20,212 SF parcel at the corner of Mechanic St. and Granite Avenue, a redesign of a 5-story, 34-unit proposal presented in 2021. She said the project had gone before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) in November 2022 and that a second ZBA hearing was scheduled for March 15th. Architect Tony Hsiao of Finegold Alexander presented the revised plans, which include 1,500 SF of commercial space, 46,826 SF of residential space, 9,260 SF of parking, 24 two-bedroom and two one-bedroom units with 3 affordable units, 38 stacker parking spaces, 2 handicap spaces, 1 garage space for loading, six outdoor commercial spaces and three outside loading pickup/drop off spaces, the latter three located curbside at Granite Avenue. Existing conditions and the buildings to be demolished were addressed. Storage for 40 bikes and sustainable features such as solar panels and all-electric utilities were proposed. Sidewalks with granite curbing would be added along Granite and Mechanic Streets with building setbacks of 10-12,' with new trees, plantings and buffers. The building itself will be 53' 2" in height, 61'2" including mechanical equipment, with massing on Granite Ave. and step backs to one story facing Mechanic St. A green roof was planned for over the parking area on Mechanic St. and the fourth floor was stepped back to include terraces. Building materials, including elongated light grey brick, a granite base, fiber cement and aluminum composite were discussed. Window design, landscaping and shadow studies were addressed. It was mentioned that the construction management, stormwater management and long-term operations plans were the same as those proposed in 2021 and that the footprint had not changed. Traffic and engineering plans had been peer reviewed for a larger project and were considered "manageable."

Ms. Tougias mentioned the new tax revenue and diversity of housing options the building would provide and said that the Master Plan and the Housing Production Plan both indicate a community need for this type of housing. She believed the width of the driveway could be reduced from 16 ft. to 10-12 ft., that a change in paving should demark the sidewalk separately from the driveway and the parking spaces, that the street trees may need protection, that the vent requirements on the façade should be verified given the building is proposed to be all electric and dryer vents can run vertically through the building and that the terraces should be reduced in size. Additionally, she requested more information about the façade facing direct abutters and the blank wall details at the first level on Mechanics Street. Ms. Oldfield said she supported mixed use, but questioned the benefit to the neighborhood, the size and character of the building design and the safety of the stacker parking system. Ms. Hall believed that reducing the commercial space, originally 4,100 SF, to 1,500 SF, was a "missed opportunity" and suggested the building design be dispersed horizontally and red bricks used to soften the design. The challenge of providing parking for commercial use was discussed and it was suggested that legal counsel be consulted on how architectural design features may be regulated under the Site Plan Approval process.

Public Comment:

John David Corey of 1452 Canton Ave. believed that the project is too big and that the setbacks should be increased. He said the ground floor should have a "warmer," more residential look with more green space. He suggested eliminating fiber cement and glass balconies and incorporating a mansard roof.

Andrew D'Amato of 26 Pierce St. said that some in the East Milton Neighborhood Association did not believe the building fit the character of the neighborhood and that more traditional building materials should be used with a less modern design.

On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Mr. Boehler the hearing was continued to February 23rd at 7:10 p.m. On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Mr. Boehler, the 1200 Brush Hill Rd. public hearing was continued to February 23rd at 7:05 p.m.

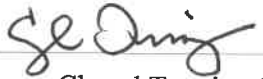
6. New Business: East Milton Zoning Request for Proposals

Mr. Czerwienski discussed evaluation criteria, conducting reference checks and the possibility of scheduling interviews. The Board discussed whether streamlining the selection process was possible, requirements for inclusivity, the need for community engagement, and price considerations. Mr. Czerwienski reminded the Board that there are strict legal requirements related to review and discussion of the proposals, and that it was important for members to utilize the spreadsheet that he provided. He said that he would confirm with Town Counsel his understanding that if interviews were to be conducted, all firms would have to be interviewed. Spreadsheets rating each applicant would be discussed at the February 23rd meeting to help develop a collective ranking of the contending firms.

7. Old Business:

Mr. Czerwienski gave an overview of the topics for discussion at the February 16th public forum on MBTA zoning and said that an online survey is on the Town website. Strategies for publicizing the forum were discussed.

8. Adjourn: On a motion by Ms. Tougias, seconded by Ms. Oldfield, the meeting was adjourned at 10:51p.m.


Cheryl Tougias, Secretary

