

Arlington Redevelopment Board
February 29, 2016 Minutes
Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall – 7:00pm

Approved: March 21, 2016

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Andrew Bunnell (Chair), Mike Cayer, Kin Lau, Andy West

ABSENT:

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Laura Wiener, Ted Fields

Documents Used:

Plan set dated February 16, 2016 submitted by Mark Noonan for 248 Mass Ave

Zoning Warrant Articles submitted by ten registered voters

Outreach Plan for Town meeting dated February 25, 2016 submitted by Laura Wiener

Warrant Articles submitted by the ARB dated February 19, 2016

Letter dated February 6, 2016 by John Worden regarding the Atwood House

Memo dated February 25, 2016 on Town committees with ARB and Planning Department participation, submitted by Jennifer Raitt

Draft meeting minutes dated January 28, 2016

Draft meeting minutes dated February 1, 2016

Letter dated February 22, 2016 by Cori Beckwith regarding a request for a letter of support for the Conservation Commission

The Chairman opened the meeting at 7:00pm and said that ACMi was recording the meeting. Mr. Bunnell turned to the agenda item of 248 Mass Ave, and the request to change a façade treatment at this location. Mark Noonan, owner of 248 Mass Ave, introduced himself to the Board and explained the requested material and design changes to the design that was approved by the Board on February 23, 2015, to build a 3-story, 3 unit building on Mass. Ave. Architect Joseph Artley discussed the cost reduction that would result from adjusting the materials being used in this project.

Mr. Cayer said he was disappointed to see the request to change materials used at this property. He said he was concerned that the property may look like a different project, and that abutters would want to know the extent of these proposed changes.

Mr. Lau asked for some clarification on the project as a whole, since he was not in attendance when the original special permit was voted. Mr. Noonan explained the features of the project and said the overall concept of the building has not changed, and that the massing has not changed significantly. Mr. Lau said that Mr. Cayer has a good point in terms of how the look of the building has changed.

Mr. Bunnell asked if the landscaping plan had changed from the original plan set. Mr. Noonan said it did not. Ms. Wiener noted that a landscaping plan had been submitted and approved by the Planning Director, as required by the permit condition. Mr. Cayer asked what the original plan was for the condensers, because he does not think that condensers by the first floor were proposed in the first hearing. Mr. Noonan said the condensers could be moved to wherever the Board prefers. Mr. Cayer stated that the approved plans are what the project should be building. These items cannot just be changed on their own.

Mr. West said that the original plans were distinctly different. The building details were a reason the Board originally approved the project, and he said these plans have changed significantly. Mr. Bunnell agreed and said the building is not really traditional, and it is not really contemporary. It is now a large hybrid building in a very central area of Arlington. The changes seem significant enough to warrant re-opening the special permit.

Mr. Noonan said he did not think the neighbors would be affected greatly by the changes being proposed. Mr. Cayer added that this is less about aesthetics and more about process. The neighbors will want to know about all these changes being proposed. Mr. West suggested that Mr. Noonan fully embrace the new aesthetic and come back to the Board to re-open the special permit.

Mr. Bunnell moved to the next agenda item of the discussion of the ARB Zoning Article language for the public hearing, which has been moved to March 21, 2016. Mr. Bunnell added that tonight's meeting is for the Board to decide if any changes to the language will be made before the public hearing, but the Board will not be taking public comment for this item. Ms. Wiener summarized the proposed changes to the Zoning Article language. Charlie Kalaskas, Chair of the Master Plan Implementation Committee, commented that the Committee reviewed these changes and agreed with what is being proposed. The Master Plan Committee felt that these changes will help to promote the type of development espoused in the Master Plan. The Committee recommends the language be adopted as stated. The Board discussed the language with Ms. Wiener and Ted Fields from the Planning Department, and suggested some changes.

Mr. Cayer recommended that diagrams and other visuals be part of the presentation to Town Meeting on this topic. Ms. Wiener said they are being worked on.

Mr. Bunnell turned to the next agenda item of outreach and education plan for Town Meeting members to learn about the proposed zoning bylaw changes. Ms. Wiener said that the staff will be holding a forum on zoning on April 13 or April 14 and asked if the Board members could attend one of those nights. The Board decided that April 14 would work best. Ms. Wiener gave an overview of what would be presented and discussed at the forum. Mr. Bunnell stated that he does not think one meeting will be sufficient. The Board and Planning staff will further discuss a schedule for these upcoming meetings.

Mr. Bunnell moved on to the next agenda item of Town Meeting Zoning Articles submitted by ten registered voters. Mr. Bunnell asked that one of the two registered voters in the audience come up and discuss their article. John Worden, of 27 Jason Street, summarized the seven articles that have been proposed. Mr. Cayer asked for a further explanation of Article 16, Revision of Height Calculation, and how the calculations would be produced. Chris Loreti, of 56 Adams Street, said the way that this article is written would depend on the slope of a house lot. The Board discussed how homes that are built into hills work within the language of this proposed article. Mr. Cayer said this proposed zoning language is very harsh for essentially half of Arlington residents who live in hilly parts of town, especially the Heights.

The Board turned to the agenda item of the Atwood House. Ms. Wiener said that Inspectional Services has issued a citation for the property for boarding the windows for more than seven days. Mr. Loreti suggested the Board look at the conditions of the special permit. The Board said they would look at the conditions of the special permit. Mr. Cayer asked if staff could discuss this issue with the trustees of the property. Ms. Wiener said that there have been discussions with Mr. Jeffrey Noyes, the owner. Bunnell said he would like an explanation of what the owner's intention is with this property.

Mr. Bunnell introduced Jennifer Raitt, the new Director of Planning and Community Development to the Board. He said that he asked Ms. Raitt to give an update of all the committees for which the ARB is involved. Ms. Raitt said a number of staff members provide support or serve on committees, along with ARB members as well. Ms. Wiener gave an update on the Housing Production Plan. She said the planning process is moving very quickly because the funding will expire at the end of this fiscal year. Ms. Wiener said that the ARB acting as the Town's Planning Board will need to adopt this plan.

Ms. Raitt gave a status update on the Arlington Redevelopment Board properties. Two immediate items that are being worked on are an RFP for the Central School for new tenants and renovations at the Jefferson Cutter House. Mr. Cayer asked if a space analysis has been done by the Town, for the Town needs. Ms. Raitt said she is working with the Town Manager's Office to discuss needs and use of the space, so she will keep this in mind during this process.

The Board turned to the agenda item of approving the meeting minutes from January 28, 2016 and February 1, 2016. The Board made minor edits to each set of minutes. Mr. Cayer moved to approve the January 28, 2016 and February 1, 2016 meeting minutes as amended. Mr. Lau seconded. All voted in favor.

Mr. Bunnell said the Board received two pieces of correspondence. One of the pieces was John Worden's letter regarding Atwood House. The second was a request from the Conservation Commission requesting a letter of support for the Spy Pond Protection and Erosion Control application to the Community Preservation Committee, for CPA funding. Ms. Raitt gave some background on the project. Ms. Raitt added that the Conservation Commission wants the letter prior to March 16, 2016. Mr. Bunnell said the Board will need more information overall about this request and future requests, including budgets and project details, in order to support groups and projects that are in line with the Redevelopment Board's mission. Mr. Cayer went through the full list of all applications that were submitted to the Community Preservation Act Committee. He stated that in the future, it would be good to have the applicant and a member of the CPAC come and discuss the request for a letter of support with the Board. Mr. Bunnell said that at this time the Board respectfully declines to write a letter of support for the Conservation Commission.

The Board turned to the agenda item of new business, not to be acted upon at this meeting. Mr. Bunnell thanked the members of the Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Planning staff for their work on the zoning articles that will be submitted at Town Meeting.

The Board discussed their upcoming meeting schedule. The March 21, 2016 public hearing will be held at the Senior Center. The Board and staff discussed the tentative upcoming meeting schedule put in place leading up to Town Meeting, and the possible special permit hearings that will be scheduled in the future. Following March 21, the next ARB meeting will be April 4.

Mr. Cayer moved to adjourn. Mr. Lau seconded.