

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, January 6, 2020, 7:30 PM
Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall Annex
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Andrew Bunnell (Chair), Eugene Benson, David Watson, Kin Lau, Rachel Zsembery

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development and Erin Zwirko, Assistant Director

The Chair called the meeting to order and notified all attending that the meeting is being recorded by ACMi.

The Chair introduced the first agenda item, Environmental Design Review, Continued Public Hearing for Special Permit Docket # 3610, 1386 Massachusetts Ave. Phil Silverman introduced himself and Joseph Lekach, Apothca CEO. Phil Silverman, counsel for Apothca, gave an overview of the sign plan and the building elevation for Apothca location. Mr. Benson asked if the door to the Bank of America ATM would be directly next to the Apothca entrance. Mr. Lekach said that the ATM and Apothca doors will be next to each other as it is now but the Apothca vestibule will be walled off.

Mr. Silverman reviewed the plans for the parking lot behind the building including landscaping for the area. Mr. Silverman said catch basin grate inlets will replace rain gardens to catch stormwater runoff. Mr. Lau said that including the speed bumps in the parking lot will help to keep the water from rushing out of the parking lot into the street. Mr. Lau asked if Apothca could include curb breaks by the garden to allow some water to drain into the ground.

The Chair asked if the fence in the plan addresses the abutters concerns about the existing fence. Mr. Silverman said that Apothca was waiting to hear back from some abutters and that Apothca will work with the abutters to address their concerns. Mr. Silverman said the additional lighting at the driveway entrance and exit has been added to the plan and the parking lot lighting is dark sky compliant that will not extend to the neighbors' yards.

Mr. Silverman said that there will be separate lines for medical and recreational-use customers. There are dedicated sales stations and consultation rooms for medical customers. Mr. Silverman said that while working with the Arlington Police Department (APD) the police visited the Apothca Lynn facility to observe the queuing and parking management plan in action. The current turn over for dispensaries is under 7 minutes. Mr. Silverman said that they plan on completing a Memorandum of Understanding to have a protocol set up with the APD. There will be shuttle service from Arlington and Lexington Centers as part of the opening plan for the first month of operation. Parking attendants will make sure that people are not lingering in the lots and will address the volume for the initial opening period. The queuing system will allow no more than five customers waiting at a time. Apothca will notify customers when they can come back for service, especially during high volume periods.

Mr. Silverman said the plan has been updated to include bike racks for 4 bicycles and flashing pedestrian alert signs at the driveway exit. The traffic impact analysis found that there will be additional vehicle traffic compared to the current use: approximately 142 more vehicles on a daily basis, 17 more at the morning peak hour, 30 more at the evening peak hour, and 150 more vehicles on a Saturday. Mr. Silverman said the civil engineer found that the traffic conditions will not be adversely affected by the use. Ms. Zsembery asked to confirm that there will be no double parking on the street and about the plan for rideshare drop offs. Mr. Silverman said that rideshare drivers will be directed to come through the parking lot to drop off and pick up Apothca customers.

Ms. Zsembery asked about the façade and about the colors and the change to a vinyl sign instead of the metal sign that was initially proposed. Mr. Lekach said that he agrees to change the plans to include a backlit steel cut sign. Ms. Zsembery suggested using graphic vinyl options to block the windows that will enhance the look in the retail

area.

Mr. Benson asked how customers will be able to tell which door leads to the Apothca and which leads to the ATM. Mr. Benson asked for an overview of the customer flow inside the facility. Mr. Lekach said that the interior traffic is one way with an entrance in the front of the building and exiting the side of the building to the parking lot. Mr. Lekach said that customer check in is a walled off area just inside the front door once a customer is checked in they then move to the dispensary sales floor, then to the point of sale counters, and then exit. Mr. Benson asked how many people can queue in the check in area. Mr. Lekach said that up to 15 customers can be queued at a time in the stanchioned off check in area. Mr. Silverman said that Apothca will provide updated plans that show the doorway through to the dispensary floor from the check in area as it is unclear on the current plans. Mr. Benson said he was happy to see the outdoor bicycle parking and asked if there will be any indoor bicycle parking. Mr. Lekach said that they plan to have indoor bicycle parking in the employee breakroom.

Mr. Benson asked of the dispensaries open in Massachusetts which has the highest number of customers per hour, and if that volume was used for the traffic impact statement. Mr. Silverman said that the Brookline facility has the highest customer traffic in Massachusetts. Mr. Silverman said that there is no other facility that has near the volume of Brookline so the Brookline statistics were not used for the study. Mr. Lekach said that the volume at the Brookline facility is an anomaly across the entire country. Mr. Lau asked about the size of the Brookline space. Mr. Silverman said that the Brookline location is a much larger facility than the proposed Apothca facility. Mr. Benson said that he is concerned about not using the Brookline number is that we may end up with an undercount as this will be the first facility outside of Boston and this facility will be used by the neighboring towns without facilities. Mr. Silverman said that if Apothca does end up with a Brookline volume scenario then Apothca will have to amend the Memorandum of Understanding with the APD and devise a different system. Mr. Benson said that he would like to see the system that would be put in place if Apothca does have numbers similar to Brookline in advance. Ms. Zsembery said that using an average volume may be more appropriate. Mr. Benson said he would like to see the worst case scenario, to compare with the average number and would like to see the statement of understanding in advance. Mr. Benson said he feels the cars may have trouble exiting the parking lot. Mr. Benson said that Apothca may talk to the Town about removing the parking space next to the parking lot exit. Mr. Silverman said that eventually there should be additional dispensaries in Arlington and in Boston. Mr. Benson said that Apothca may be dealing with number similar to Brookline for a year and would like to see the plans for this time in advance.

Mr. Watson recommended reviewing the bicycle parking guide and working with the Department of Planning and Community Development regarding bicycle parking. Mr. Watson said he would like to see additional outdoor bicycle parking. Mr. Watson said that he was pleased to see a MBTA pass subsidy in Apothca's Transportation Demand Management plan. Mr. Watson said that he would like to ideally see a shower in the breakroom for employees that commute to work by bike. Mr. Watson said that he likes the plan to provide public transportation options to employees and customers so they do not feel they need to drive to the facility. Mr. Lekach said that they will use their email list, weekly newsletter, website, app, and Apothca's google maps listing to provide public transportation options. Mr. Watson asked if Apothca would monitor and collect data to determine how employees and customers are getting to the dispensary and provide that information in Apothca's annual report to the Town.

Mr. Benson asked if there will be a written agreement with the Sunrise facility that allows Apothca employees to use the Sunrise parking lot. Ms. Raitt said that a parking agreement is required as part of the Special Permit for Sunrise Assisted Living. The Chair asked how Apothca plans to prevent customers from parking in other business' lots. Mr. Lekach said that Apothca's parking attendants will be watching customers as they leave and security staff will respond. The Chair said he was more concerned about preventing Apothca customers from parking in other business' spaces than addressing it after the fact. Mr. Lekach said that it is important that it is caught and

addressed and continually tell the customers not to park in other lots. Mr. Lekach said it can also be included in the first customer intake information. Mr. Watson said that with the poor sight lines exiting the site's parking lot asked that Apothca also monitors how customers are doing exiting the lot to see if it is problematic. Ms. Raitt said that the NETA facility in Brookline provides sandwich boards that state that there is no public consumption and no public parking or parking in private lots.

Mr. Lau said that would like to see the updated floor plan with the updated vestibule and asked if there will be gender neutral bathrooms. Mr. Lau asked if the breakroom was required to be fully screened. Mr. Lekach said that it is required to screen the windows in the breakroom like the remainder of the facility. Mr. Lau asked if it is possible to add some lighting to warm up the façade of the building. The building does not match the character of the other buildings in Arlington Heights. Mr. Lekach said that they plan to stain the wood on the façade back to the original color to add some warmth to the building. The Chair opened the floor to public comments.

Sutton Rockwood asked for a rat management plan update. Mr. Lekach said that Apothca is working with an exterminator to address the issue. Mr. Lekach said that they are taking the rodent problem seriously and will make sure that the problem is addressed before starting the landscaping work.

Laura Larkin asked for a traffic count on Paul Revere and then another count after the facility opens to gauge the increase in traffic volume.

Mr. Lau moved to continue the hearing until January 27, 2020, Ms. Zsembery seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

The Chair introduced the second agenda item, Potential Zoning Bylaw amendments for 2020 Annual Town Meeting continued discussion from December 2, 2019. Ms. Raitt gave an overview of section 8.2.2, corrections, and other potential amendments for the Board. Mr. Watson asked if there are Town Committees exploring the possibility of prohibiting new fossil fuel connections. Ms. Raitt said that the Clean Energy Future Committee, representatives from Mothers Out Front, and Sustainable Arlington are currently in discussions in order to file something for Spring Town Meeting. Ms. Raitt said the Clean Energy Future Committee will be vetting a solar bylaw similar to the Watertown requirements as part of their Net Zero planning process. Mr. Watson said that he would like information detailing the economic impact of retrofitting existing homes from fossil fuel to electric heat made readily available to the public. Mr. Watson said that he thought there might be concern that the proposal would affect existing homes, not just new construction and substantial renovations. Mr. Watson said that for those homeowners considering converting from fossil fuels understanding the economics of a retrofit is complicated.

The Chair introduced Barbara Thornton and asked her to review her proposal. Ms. Thornton asked the Board to move forward with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) proposal at the next Town Meeting. Ms. Thornton's second proposal is to have speakers sign up in advance of a night of Town Meeting as proponents or opponents of an article so the Town Moderator has an opportunity to conduct a balanced discussion at Town Meeting. Ms. Thornton said that this is how Brookline organizes their Town Meetings. Ms. Thornton's third proposal is to allow affordable housing to be built on non-conforming lots. Mr. Benson said that he would like to hear from the Town Counsel whether this is consistent with M.G.L. c.40A. Ms. Thornton's last proposal was for a design completion sponsored by the Town building off of the MIT student's Broadway corridor plan. The Chair said that the Board would like to have Ms. Thornton attend the 1/27/20 ARB meeting to have a deeper discussion and give the Board a chance to review the information Ms. Thornton provided.

The Chair introduced the third agenda item, Preparation for joint meeting with Select Board on January 13, 2020.

Mr. Lau said that he would like to have a discussion so that the Board can decide what they are trying to achieve, including balanced growth and additional affordable housing. Ms. Raitt said that all work should relate back to the Master Plan. The Chair said that the Master Plan was created in 2011 and it is probably time to start thinking about revising the Master Plan. The Chair said it may be time to charge the Master Plan Implementation Committee with some new tasks and figure out how the Master Plan can be updated for 2020 forward. Ms. Raitt suggested having a discussion with the MPIC members at the first ARB meeting in February.

Ms. Raitt said that she and Adam Chapdelaine discussed a draft agenda for the joint Board meeting. Ms. Raitt gave the board an overview of the draft agenda. Ms. Raitt said that she and Adam Chapdelaine would give an overview of the Housing in Arlington presentation highlights to refresh the group on the topic and why it is important to talk about housing. There will be a review of future warrant articles and each board's goal of reviewing both boards' warrant articles. The main focus of the meeting will be the outreach strategy for moving forward with a housing discussion and recommendations for a future Special Town Meeting, potentially in February 2021. The Select Board and ARB members may also set dates for future joint board meetings.

Mr. Lau asked if the discussion would include commercial and industrial zoning. Ms. Raitt said that that would be a good question to bring up at the joint meeting. The Chair said that commercial growth is an important topic as the Town is looking to expand the commercial tax base. Mr. Benson said that the housing discussion is not complete without taking the commercial and industrial into account in order to build areas with a village feel while creating additional housing. Ms. Zsembery said that she agrees and that it is important to discuss expanding the commercial spaces that support additional housing density. Mr. Watson said creating housing incentives may result in the loss of commercial or industrial space. Ms. Raitt said that she could add an overview of the current plans for commercial, economic, and industrial development to the draft agenda for the joint Board meeting to start that conversation.

The Chair introduced the fourth agenda item, Meeting Minutes (11/18/19 and 12/16/19)

Mr. Benson moved to accept the 11/18/19 meeting minutes with amendments, Mr. Watson seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Benson moved to accept the 12/16/19 meeting minutes with amendments, Mr. Lau seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

The Chair introduced the fifth agenda item, Open Forum and opened the floor to the public.

Don Seltzer said that he was pleased with the Board's website update. He asked what provisions will be available at the joint board meeting for members of the public to speak and present ideas. Ms. Raitt said there will be time for public comment.

Barbara Thornton said that she feels the most important thing is for the two Boards to talk to each other during the joint meeting, particularly to discuss housing. Ms. Raitt said that the priority of the meeting is for the two Boards to gain agreement on how to move forward together and create an outreach strategy. Ms. Raitt said that there will be a draft of the community engagement plan prepared for the joint Board meeting.

Mr. Lau moved to adjourn, Ms. Zsembery seconded, all voted in favor 5-0. Meeting adjourned.