



ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

TOWN HALL, ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02476

781 - 316 - 3090

August 27, 2020

John Hurd, Chair
Select Board
Town of Arlington
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476

RE: 1165R Massachusetts Avenue Application for a Comprehensive Permit
Comments to Select Board

Dear Members of the Board,

To aid the Board in compiling comments from the Town with regard to the proposed 1165R Massachusetts Avenue Comprehensive Permit application, the Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB) met on Monday, August 17, 2020 to review and provide preliminary feedback on the proposed development. The primary concern expressed by ARB members was the loss of more property where more commercial development could occur in town.

One of the ARB's stated goals is to encourage and increase economic development opportunities through mixed-use development and otherwise. Over this past year, one of the ways the Department of Planning and Community Development advanced that goal was to engage RKG Associates to conduct an analysis of the existing land uses within the town's current industrial zoning districts with the intent of developing recommendations that would modernize the districts and encourage growth. The project goals include positioning Arlington to attract new businesses and jobs in emerging growth industries to the Industrial District and creating opportunities through which Arlington can realize greater revenue with strategic amendments to the Zoning Bylaw and Zoning Map.

A few of the study's initial recommendations include the following: supporting an increase in the size and variety of spaces for light manufacturing and office space; leveraging the Minuteman Bikeway as an alternative mobility mode; and requiring sustainable and resilient urban design practices to protect the environment and mitigate the impact of new construction. The study is being overseen by the Master Plan Implementation Committee's Zoning Bylaw Working Group. The group has discussed the following potential strategies to advance the project goals: amending zoning to require improved building placement to enhance the public built environment and protect water quality through enhanced stormwater management; providing general recommendations for all Industrial Zoning Districts to address the public realm in order to improve opportunities for walkability and sense of place; and providing design recommendations that protect the town of Arlington's environmental assets and reduce the impact of the built environment. Any amendments to zoning would aim to

influence new development and additions or expansions of existing buildings greater than 50% of its existing footprint. While the study will not be concluding until later this calendar year, the recommendations that are emerging could be helpful guideposts for this proposed development. For example, the ARB expressed an interest in ensuring that the project actively incorporate and encourage multiple transportation options, including biking and walking. They emphasized that connections to the Minuteman Bikeway should be established and encouraged.

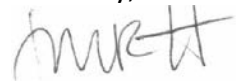
In closing, the ARB is focused on opportunities to enhance and increase commercial opportunities and is concerned that the already limited amount of space available for commercial uses could be altered and lost at 1165R Massachusetts Avenue. The ARB will be interested in further exploring barriers to commercial opportunities at this and potentially other locations in the community. The Board wondered if the applicant might consider dedicating the proposed amenity space to a potential commercial use or making it available for the community at large as a public indoor space.

While commercial development and multi-modal transportation is important to the ARB, the Board also has a stated goal to expand much-needed affordable housing opportunities and recognizes that this project will help to achieve affordable housing goals.

The ARB looks forward to providing additional reviews and comments as the development progresses.

Thank you for your consideration of the Redevelopment Board's comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "murt", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jennifer M. Raitt
Secretary Ex-Officio
on behalf of the Arlington Redevelopment Board