

Arlington Redevelopment Board
August 6, 2018, 7:30 p.m.
Senior Center, Main Room, First Floor
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMI.

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

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Planning and Community Development

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30pm and turned to the first item on the agenda, EDR Special Permit, Public Hearing from Leader Bank, 180 Mass Ave, Docket #3576.

John Fanciullo, Executive VP of Leader Bank, petitioner came to the table. The Chair stated new designs meet EDR criteria, and distributed copies of the updated proposal. Responding to Mr. West's request, Mr. Fanciullo gave a description of the signage text and location relative to other businesses. Brief discussion ensued. The Chair opened to public comment; none forthcoming. The Chair entertained the motion to approve. Mr. Lau so moved. Mr. West seconded. The Board voted unanimously in favor of new Leader Bank signage proposal (5-0).

The Chair turned to the third item, Housing Production Plan update. Ms. Raitt described the documents she had distributed to the Board. She updated the Board, stating the previous meeting they had appointed a new member to the Committee; another appointment expected at the next meeting. Ms. Raitt stated the focal point is zoning in high density districts, R4 through R7, as well as accessory dwelling units. Specific proposals and forum are forthcoming.

The second area concerns working with the Housing Corporation of Arlington regarding new production at Downing Square and Broadway. Construction has been pending since 2016, and other opportunities for preservation/new construction are being sought, including mixed-use. There is a scarcity of affordable units.

Ms. Raitt then discussed modification of parking requirements to encourage housing production, housing support to seniors, and the Municipal Affordable Housing Trust Fund. She will approach the Select Board as to how to move Symmes and other funds to create affordable housing. Mr. Watson asked how the money could be used. Ms. Raitt stated it is to create or preserve affordable housing, which falls behind when new housing is built. She will follow up with Mr. Benson, since he is the Board representative to the Community Preservation Act Committee.

Mr. Lau asked about inclusionary housing falling short, not kicking in until six units, and asked if there is a way to encourage more units to meet the inclusionary minimum – e.g., changes to setbacks in smaller lots, and parking. Ms. Raitt stated they are looking into this as part of multifamily housing zoning project.

Mr. Benson asked about incentives for developers to include more affordable housing. Ms. Raitt referred to a study being conducted in Arlington Heights. Mr. Benson stated his concern about commercial spaces not being filled in mixed use areas, and how these spaces might be put to new uses. Ms. Raitt stated different models are being considered.

The Chair turned to a group email regarding Youth Villages (formerly Germaine Lawrence) in Arlington Heights. Ms. Raitt explained that Youth Villages is vacating their space by the end of September and transitioning students to other facilities. Saint Anne's Church has been leasing a parcel to the school. Mr. Lau asked if the buildings would be grandfathered for use by the church. Ms. Raitt advised no, they would have to stay the same use, and it is zoned R1. Mr. Benson asked about neighborhood involvement in the process. Ms. Raitt stated this is being monitored regarding impact on the neighborhood. Ms. Raitt stated there is not much information available at the moment, and she will update the Board when she has further information.

The Chair turned back to item 2, Continued Public Hearing, Redevelopment Board Rules and Regulations. Ms. Raitt stated she received comments from Mr. West; no other written or emailed comments from the public or other Board members. Mr. Watson asked for a quick review of changes since the last iteration. Ms. Raitt stated her main focus was submittals, Rule 10. She consolidated items for consistency. The second focus was about EDR – 3D renderings et al. Otherwise there were minor grammatical changes.

Mr. West suggested edits to page 3, Rule 6; and on page 6, Rule 14, regarding modeling/3D rendering. Mr. Lau mentioned adding location of public utilities/trash in the drawings; after some discussion, Ms. Raitt stated this will be added before “Landscape” section as “Civil Site Plan.” Mr. Watson proposed indication of parking/bike parking. Mr. West proposed adding this under “Site Plan.” Mr. Lau asked about materials; after some discussion, it was proposed adding that applicants provide physical samples of building materials at Board’s discretion. Mr. Benson recommended a number of editorial changes. Mr. Lau requested clarification of “abutting.” Mr. Watson suggested changes as well. The Chair opened the matter to the public.

Arlington resident Steve Revilak pointed out possible contradictions regarding signage illumination. Ms. Raitt addressed this.

The Chair proposed a vote that evening. Mr. Benson moved to adopt the Rules and Regulations as amended. Mr. West suggested a final review. Ms. Raitt was open to waiting until the next meeting for a vote. The Chair again proposed a vote. Mr. Lau seconded. The Board voted unanimously in favor of amended Rules and Regulations. (5-0).

The Chair requested a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lau so moved. Seconded. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn, 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.