

Arlington Redevelopment Board
September 17, 2018, 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall, 2nd Floor Meeting Room
Meeting Minutes

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

STAFF: Jennifer Raitt, Director, Planning and Community Development

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

The Chair opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m. and turned to the first item on the agenda, EDR Special Permit, Public Hearing. Athena Peters for Adventure Pub, at 190 Massachusetts Avenue, to re-open Special Permit Docket #3161 in accordance with the provisions of MGL Chapter 40A § 11, and the Town of Arlington Zoning Bylaw Section 3.4 Environmental Design Review. The Redevelopment Board will review the application to determine the use as a restaurant and performance space, under Section 5.5.3, Use Regulations for Business Districts, and signage, under Section 6.2, Signs.

The Applicant presented their application materials to the Board. Athena Peters President of Parthenon Entertainment (Adventure Pub), Jason Smith (head chef), and Namet Zahim (graphics) joined the table for the presentation. Ms. Peters described Adventure Pub – a family friendly full service restaurant and bar with board games and evening entertainment. The permit request is for a use request and for hosting special events in the restaurant space, as well as team building exercises. The events may occur monthly. They are utilizing the existing space; there are three sections of the new restaurant. No remodeling changes and same capacity as prior restaurant (118 seats). Sign plans will mimic what exists, but there will be a reduction in the number of window decals. Exterior lighting will also remain.

Mr. Bunnell opened the discussion for the Board to ask the applicant questions.

Mr. Lau asked Ms. Peters if they will have props or scenery involved in their special events. She noted that the props are hand sized; it is not a full, typical theater production. He also asked if the blade sign will only be updated with vinyl and if it will remain un-illuminated. Ms. Peters noted that the overall signage will be reduced so that there is only one window decal in the center window. The blade sign will be replaced with vinyl and the sign will not have interior illumination.

Mr. Watson asked if the special events and regular dining will run concurrently. Ms. Peters said yes. He also wondered if the applicant would consider installing bike racks in conjunction with the Town. Ms. Raitt stated that this is the location of a new bus stop and would follow up with Ms. Peters to discuss installation of a rack. She also noted that exterior seating is unlikely.

Mr. Bunnell opened the discussion for public comment. Multiple members of the public commented.

Brad Adams of 27 Montague Street said that he struggles to find a place close to him and something new with food and drink and games. He also likes that this would be on the bus line. Sarah Singer and Eric Singer (no address provided) support the idea and concept. Daniel Wilmington of 179 Franklin Street echoed other comments and stated that board games are a great way to socialize and to meet other people. Batal (no last name provided) of Henderson Street is always looking for a place that combines dinner, drinks, and games. It is difficult to find this type of venue and there is nothing in Arlington. He supports this application. Shannon and Steven (no last name provided) of 38 Oakhill Ave noted that Athena (Ms. Peters) is top notch,

very detailed and Jason's (Mr. Smith) food is excellent. The two of them together is going to be something absolutely wonderful. They also stated that there are already many sports clubs and they are looking forward to go to a place where they can eat and engage in activities they enjoy.

Mr. Bunnell closed the public hearing and entertained a motion from the board. The Board voted (5-0) with the condition that the applicant work with the Department of Planning and Community Development to install a bike rack.

Mr. Bunnell moved to the next agenda item. Ms. Raitt discussed the potential amendment to the Redevelopment Board Rules and Regulations. Mr. Benson raised the idea of amending the rules to allow for an option for electronic signatures of decisions. In this scenario, Ms. Raitt would send a draft decision, the Board would send any comments, and submit an approval via email and Ms. Raitt would finalize the decision with an electronic signature. Mr. Benson said this would allow the Board to delegate this task to Jenny to proceed with filings. Ms. Raitt stated that she will work with Town Counsel on potential e-signature options and bring them back to the Board for discussion. She noted that a public hearing will be posted to amend the rules.

Mr. Bunnell moved to the next agenda item. Ms. Raitt presented an update on the sign bylaw scope of work and timeline. The scope of work and timeline were shared and a proposal from Lisa Wise Consulting for the sign bylaw regulation update. The bylaw update was discussed during recodification, but postponed due to the substantive level of changes needed. Issues to be discussed include potentially moving the sign bylaw from Zoning to the Town Bylaw and to create greater consistency. The consultant kicked off work. The Zoning Bylaw Working Group is working with the consultant. There will be public hearings and, ultimately, proposed amendments will be sent to 2019 Annual Town Meeting. The Board wondered why there was only one proposal. Jenny mentioned that it is a large scope of work on a small budget and that there is a lot of competition right now for consultant time.

The Board requested that the consultant or staff make presentations to the Board during the sign update process. Ms. Raitt will incorporate reviews into the timeline to include the Board's ability to review the draft sign bylaw analysis (task 1.4) and a full draft amendment (during tasks 2.1 and 2.2). This will allow the Board to discuss what should be included and excluded in the bylaw and before any proposal moves forward. The Board can meet with the consultant during scheduled times when the consultant is in Arlington for specific visits with the Zoning Bylaw Working Group.

Ms. Raitt will be in touch if Board members who may want to be interviewed as part of the process. Mr. Watson suggested that Board members also provide Ms. Raitt with direct feedback on the sign bylaw so that she can provide it to the consultant. Ms. Raitt will also share similar documents with the board that will give the board an idea of what a draft sign analysis would look like.

Mr. Bunnell moved to the next agenda item. Ms. Raitt provided an update on Special Town Meeting (STM) and Recreational/ Adult-Use Marijuana Bylaw timeline. The Select Board voted to hold a Special Town Meeting on December 5th. The warrant will open on October 4th. The next board meeting, the board will vote on a warrant article. The legal ad is due on October 12th. The first hearing will be held on November 5th and be continued on November 7th and potentially November 13th. The Report to Town Meeting will be needed by November 19th. The Marijuana Study Committee will begin meeting to review the draft amendments that the DPCD have been preparing.

The Board moved to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.