

Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, June 3, 2019, 7:30 p.m.
Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor Conference Room
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

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

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

The Chair opened the meeting and notified the attendees that the meeting is being recorded by ACMi. The Chair welcomed new ARB member, Rachel Zsembery.

The Chair introduced Agenda Environmental Design Review, 189 and 191 Broadway, Arlington, MA - Docket #3598 Public Hearing. Mr. Annese introduced the Dr. Jennifer Schickler and Dr. Catherine Cole, owners of the Arlington Animal Clinic and gave an overview of the project. Arlington Animal Clinic includes veterinary medicine and surgery and has been in operation since 1975 and would like to acquire the building at 189 Broadway to expand the practice. There is no parking at 191 Broadway; if 189 is acquired then that would include five parking spaces. There will be six bicycle parking spaces on the exterior of the building and three bicycle parking spaces inside the building for Arlington Animal Clinic staff. No additional pervious area will be added or construction will take place with this project, meaning that a stormwater management plan is not required.

The architect reviewed the project plans and explained how they would create continuity between the two buildings. The plan is to incorporate design elements to clean up the façade and add benches for outdoor seating. An overview of the site was provided, including bike and vehicle parking locations and screening for the existing dumpster. The existing trees will remain and landscaping will be added in the buffer between the rear lot and abutting properties. The HVAC will be placed on top of the roof; the unit is 3.5 feet tall. The existing transformer will be repainted and no additional equipment will be added.

The Chair said that he supports the proposal and is glad this business can expand and remain in town. Mr. Lau asked if there would be a diesel or gas generator on the roof and if there will be screening on the residential side of the building, and how they would access the roof. The architect explained there would be a gas generator and will explore a screen on the residential side of the building. There will be a ladder installed to access to the roof. Mr. Watson said he likes the project and that a longstanding business will stay in town. He said he is concerned about bike rack placement because where it is in the driveway creates the possibility of maneuvering cars hitting the parked bikes. The bike rack is typically placed closer to a building entrance. The bike rack to be used inside the building requires bikes to be lifted into the bike racks. The new bylaw states that bikes shall not be required to be lifted into bike racks. Ms. Zsembery said she appreciates the material choices for this project. She asked about the signage reflectivity of the metal sign with the overhead lights, and if the sign will have a matte or polished finish. The sign will be made of steel with a patina to the material and coated to make the material more matte. Ms. Zsembery asked if there will be additional signage for the business at the entrance. There will be logos on the window and business hours on the doors.

The Chair opened the meeting to public comment. Catherine McKinnon 36 Warren Street said that her property is on the other side of the fence and wanted to know what kind of waste will be going into the dumpster. She is also concerned about noise emissions from the AC unit. The applicant will explore acoustical screening options to help direct the sound away from neighbors. James Chen 38 Warren Street said he is concerned about the noise and aesthetics. He asked if there will be more windows on the back of the building. Windows will not be added. Ms. McKinnon added that the existing fence is old and asked if there will be the landscaping to cover the fence. Dr. Cole explained that the fence will be repaired.

The Chair moved to approve the project with the following stipulations. Any final building signage, including additional clinic branding and clinic hours shall be reviewed and approved by the Department of Planning and Community

Development and Inspectional Services. The Owner will work with the Department of Planning and Community Development to explore placing the exterior bike rack to the front of the parking lot. Bicycle parking provided within the interior of the building will require further review by the Department for consistency with bicycle parking regulations. The Owner shall provide to the Department of Planning and Community Development for review and approval specifications of the rooftop units and appropriate screening on all four sides and noise abatement for said units. Location of roof access and related safety features shall also be reviewed and approved by the Department. The Owner shall install soundproofed windows along the Broadway facade. Mr. Lau moved to approve. Mr. Watson seconded. All voted in favor 5-0.

The Chair introduced the second agenda item, Construction of the Egerton–Herbert Green Infrastructure Project presentation by Mystic River Watershed Association (MyRWA). Patrick Herron, Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association presented. Mr. Herron provided an overview of the project implemented at Egerton and Herbert and the path for Arlington for stormwater abatement. Mr. Herron said stormwater carries a lot of pollutants that impact the Mystic River. High nutrient levels due to the pollutants have led to a bloom of invasive plants like the Water Chestnut plant that covered up to 70% of the river in 2018. Bacteria or harmful algal blooms turn the river green which also shows that the river has too many nutrients. Many water bodies are impaired for nutrients or not enough dissolved oxygen in the local Mystic River watershed. Stormwater currently runs directly to the rivers collecting nutrients from pavement. Phosphorus from pavement run off with 10-30% or the phosphorus load coming from fertilizer; the remaining amount comes from the erosion, organic materials, and litter. Mr. Herron said another option is infiltrating water into the ground, since the ground has a high capacity to absorb nutrients. Feeding the ground water leads to a healthier river.

The intersection of Egerton and Herbert was identified as a good location for a bioretention basin, or rain garden, on either side of the street. The project was funded by DEP with a grant of \$50,000.00 which went towards project management, construction, and design for the two basins. The type of materials used to fill the basins allow for infiltration and storage. The basins are designed to not have standing water to avoid a potential mosquito breeding area. Mr. Herron said that the MyRWA will continue to apply for grants for similar projects in the future. Mr. Herron said he would like the ARB to encourage developers and builders to integrate these types of bioretention structures to help the Town reduce the nutrient load. In the future it is possible that towns will be held responsible for reducing nutrient run off by 50-60% and it would be in the interest of the Town to shift the burden to developers.

Mr. Lau asked how the ARB could pass this information and standards on to developers. Mr. Watson said a design guide may be needed. Ms. Raitt explained that the Department of Planning and Community Development is working with Engineering and Conservation staff to update the town's stormwater bylaws. They will be updating the best practices guide; the raingarden could serve as an illustrative project. Mr. Herron noted that the Massachusetts stormwater handbook is being updated hopefully within 18 months with some of those resources included. Some states are including standard design details in those guides. Mr. Lau asked about the square footage needed for this type of stormwater basin; developers tend to only put water retention structures under parking garages. Mr. Herron said that the Town's compliance with the MS4 permit will require development of an acre or more to infiltrate one inch of water on site into the ground. Ms. Raitt said once the new stormwater bylaw is completed it will provide boards and commissions with the proper guidance about how to prescribe any solutions and will comply with the MS4 permit. The Department of Planning and Community Development is working in collaboration with MyRWA.

Mr. Herron mentioned that we do not necessarily need to build very big rain basins. The first .1 inches of stormwater carries about 90% of the pollutants down the street. After that initial .1 inches of rainwater the water becomes much cleaner, so capturing the beginning of the storm does a lot of good. Commitment to maintain the water retention basins is also required. Mr. Watson asked how road salt impacts the bioretention basins. Mr. Herron said that they chose salt resistant plants for this project; salt stunts plant growth. There are findings that salt levels are also increasing in the Mystic.

The Chair introduced the next agenda item, ARB Property Portfolio update. Ms. Raitt explained that the lease between the ARB and Arlington Retirement Board expires on 6/30/19. Mr. Raitt said the plan is to have the Retirement Board stay in the same location for six months and then move upstairs to the second floor of the Central School Building, to a portion of the office that is now the Weatherization office. Ms. Raitt proposed that the ARB amend the lease term through an extension keeping them in current space through 12/31/19 and extend their lease to 6/30/2021 and change their lease schedule.

Ms. Raitt said it would be best to keep the Retirement Board in the building because there is overlap between people using the Council on Aging and those visiting the Retirement office. The rent will be staying the same after the move, the Retirement board will be moving into a smaller space at 450 square feet. Mr. Lau moved to approve. Mr. Watson seconded. All voted in favor 5-0.

The Chair introduced the next agenda item, ARB Rules and Regulations draft amendment. Ms. Raitt explained the addition of a Dover review process via rule 19. Mr. Benson reviewed his concerns about wording and suggestions for the proposed changes. Mr. Benson said he has a policy concern where the proposal would allow waiver of placement by the Department of Planning and Community Development without a public hearing. Mr. Benson said he would not want to lose the opportunity for public input. Mr. Benson suggested that the ARB build a public input process into the administrative process or instead of the administrative process it should go to the ZBA or ARB and have a public hearing. Mr. Lau asked if that would be contrary to Massachusetts General Law. Ms. Raitt explained that Town Counsel recommended moving to an administrative process. Massachusetts General Law and case law makes it clear that these uses cannot be required to file special permits or public hearing processes. The Chair suggested tabling the conversation until the Board learns more from Town Counsel.

The Chair introduced the next agenda item, Next steps regarding mixed-use and multi-family use zoning. Ms. Raitt explained the plan to engage the Select Board and the ARB for conversations about what to do next regarding the need for many types of housing, working with the Metro Mayors Coalition Housing Task Force discussing local goals going forward, and all options for addressing housing issues in Arlington. Ms. Raitt expects to have those conversations and presentations culminate sometime in September at a joint Select Board and ARB meeting to review options for moving forward. Ms. Raitt said both boards will address needs and demand for housing, commercial space, mixed-use, and decide a path to guide staff moving forward. Ms. Raitt and the Town Manager also will be meeting with all Department Heads. This will potentially mean that there will be a Special Town Meeting in the fall 2020. Mr. Watson said he likes the overall process and asked if there will be opportunities for public input. Ms. Raitt said all meetings are public and the boards can determine the best community engagement plan moving forward. Mr. Benson said he is a little worried about moving ahead just focusing on housing without also including a commercial component. The Chair agreed and said he expressed that concern to the Town Manager. Ms. Raitt stated that the mixed-use, industrial zoning, and Arlington Heights action plan will remain important and help to continue that discussion and move forward with recommended actions.

The Chair moved on to the next agenda item, ARB Meeting Minutes (4/1, 4/8, 4/22). Mr. Lau moved to approve 4/1 minutes. Mr. Benson seconded. Approved 4-0. Ms. Zsembery abstained. Mr. Watson moved to approve 4/8 minutes. Mr. Lau seconded. Approved 4-0. Ms. Zsembery abstained. Mr. Benson moved to approve 4/22 minutes. Mr. Watson seconded. Approved 4-0. Ms. Zsembery abstained.

The Chair introduced the last agenda item, Upcoming ARB schedule and announcements. Ms. Raitt said that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is being developed with MAPC, which is an update to the 2012 plan. There will be a public meeting on June 13, 2019 in the Senior Center to discuss the plan. Mr. Benson asked if there will be any zoning bylaw changes that come from this plan. Ms. Raitt said that she does not expect the plan to recommend any proposed bylaw amendments. Ms. Zwirko said that the update will maintain the Town's eligibility to access Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants to mitigate disasters or to prevent future disasters. Ms. Raitt notified the Board that the June 17th ARB meeting will be cancelled.

The Chair then opened the meeting to public comment. Don Seltzer acknowledged what Mr. Watson said about resident participation in housing discussions going forward. He looks forward to finding common ground going forward. Mr. Seltzer asked about the Board's decision to vote No Action on Article 16 during Town Meeting. He asked when the decision was made and if there will be meeting minutes. Ms. Raitt said that the minutes of that meeting will be put together if the Board so desires. Steve Revilak commented on Mr. Herron's MRWA presentation that Arlington has good soil for infiltration. Mr. Revilak hopes that the Town can follow the guidance of reducing impervious surface in Town going forward. Charles Harcorn commented that he paved over his cobblestone driveway and now he realizes that that may not have been the best option after listening to the presentation on infiltration. Mr. Harcorn said perhaps there should be public outreach so residents are aware that there are more options for their driveways.

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Lau moved to adjourn. Mr. Watson seconded. All approved 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.