Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, January 27, 2020, 7:30 PM
Senior Center, Main Room, 1st Floor,
27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476
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 Docket for Special Permit Docket #3602 to review application by James F. Doherty for 1211 Mass Ave Realty Trust. The Chair asked the members of the public who wish to comment to please sign in; names will be called in order.

Attorney Mary Winstanley-O'Connor introduced herself and Greg McIntosh from Lincoln Architects. Mr. McIntosh noted the changes to the plan since the last hearing in July 2019 including: additional curb cuts for drop-offs, brick and stone building cladding, bicycle storage areas, pervious paving for sidewalks, updated planting plan including a rain garden, 22 hotel rooms with upper story step-back. The updated shadow studies that include the grading of the site show that the neighboring buildings with solar arrays will not be affected by the proposed hotel.

The Chair asked Ms. Zwirko to respond to Don Seltzer's correspondence asking questions about zoning. Ms. Zwirko explained the calculation of the floor area ratio (FAR), building height, set-backs, and usable open space.

The Chair then turned the meeting over to the members of the Board. Mr. Lau said the set-back and the upper story set-backs meet the requirements for this corner lot. Mr. Lau suggested a thicker sign band and for a more detailed stormwater drainage plan for the parking lot. Mr. Watson said he has some concerns about how all onsite parking will be handled by a valet. Mr. Watson said people may park in the surrounding area instead of paying for the valet service. Mr. Watson said that the Board would like a detailed traffic analysis for Mass. Ave. and the adjoining intersections in the area, especially during peak traffic times. Mr. Watson asked about the proposed hotel setbacks and Mr. Doherty said 117 Broadway is identical in terms of setbacks. Mr. Watson asked Ms. Zwirko about the two zoning districts that the hotel straddles. Ms. Zwirko said that Town Counsel has addressed this issue in previous emails but Ms. Zwirko said she will ask Town Counsel to prepare a more formal document.

Mr. Benson said that he agrees with Ms. Raitt's critiques included in her 1/21/2020 memo regarding this project. Mr. Benson asked for documentation that the rear parking will be used by patrons using the hotel for lodging as opposed to those patrons using the restaurant only. Mr. Doherty said that the parking lot would be reserved for overnight guests and that hotel valet parking will be free. Mr. Benson asked where staff will be parking. Mr. Doherty said that they will ask Sunrise in Arlington Heights about employee parking in addition to parking at the Ottoson School and the Town Rink. Mr. Doherty said that they are also looking into MBTA subsidies to offer employees. Mr. Doherty said that the hotel will have up to 4 employees and the restaurant will have 8 or 10 employees at peak times. Mr. Benson asked it the tour busses will be able to fit under the glass canopy at the hotel's entrance. Mr. Benson asked about the shadow study. The applicant explained that the hotel shadows will hit neighboring buildings but not the existing solar arrays. Mr. Benson said that he will look at 117 Broadway but he did not see in the bylaw anything that gives the ARB authority to change step-back requirements.

Ms. Zsembery asked about the purpose of the new courtyard, with pervious paving, to the right of the entrance. Mr. Doherty said that is a 500 square foot area proposed to be a public space. Ms. Zsembery said that the brick work on the façade of the building along with the parapet seems a bit out of scale with the Clark Street side. Mr. McIntosh said that they will take a look at that design detail. Ms. Zsembery asked about changing the window

placement to blend the architectural styles of the ground floor façade and the upper story façade. Ms. Zsembery asked that restaurant signage stay on the Mass. Ave. side of the building and not on Clark Street to help prevent additional traffic in the Clark Street neighborhood. The Chair opened the floor to public comment.

- Ann LeRoyer said there is an issue because a hotel is not currently listed as an allowable use in the B2 neighborhood. Ms. LeRoyer asked for an elevation for the rear of the hotel on the Peirce St. side to see what the view will be for those neighbors. Ms. LeRoyer also had questions about the existing trees on the property.
- Carol McDonald stated that the Clark Street intersection is a difficult intersection and Clark Street needs to be repaved.
- Steve Revilak said that Arlington is not known for welcoming new development so the town does not review many proposals. This is a good opportunity to increase Arlington's commercial tax base.
- Michael Sandler would like to see the elevation from Peirce Street. Peirce Street is considered a cut through street and there is a lot of traffic in that neighborhood. Mr. Sandler would like to know when pick-ups for laundry and trash would be scheduled as trucks backing up will be very disruptive. Mr. Sandler said he is concerned about parking and said he feels the Peirce Street neighborhood would turn into a parking lot. Mr. Sandler said he has safety concerns with commuters speeding while cutting through the neighborhood and would like to see a traffic study.
- Don Seltzer said that because this is a corner lot the Clark Street set back has to be the same as what is required in the adjoining zone. The upper story step-back is over 30 feet. Mr. Seltzer said that Inspectional Services defines the front of the building as the first structure, in this case the columns. Mr. Seltzer said he did not see anything in the application that meets the bylaw requirements for usable open space. Mr. Seltzer stated that this is a 14,000 sq. foot lot. The applicant is asking for relief under bonus provisions and that only applies if the lot is more than 20,000 sq. feet. Mr. Seltzer also asked about the driveway slope which he said does not seem to be the 5% grade that the plans show.
- Chris Loreti said that the table document is missing from the application packet. Mr. Loreti stated that the regulations for motel/hotel uses are under residential and the bonus does not apply to lots under 20,000 sq. feet. The patio cannot be considered as landscaped open space; the project does not meet the landscaped open space requirement. Mr. Loreti said the hotel does not meet the mixed-use zoning requirement. Mr. Loreti said he recommends getting an objective opinion from outside counsel regarding this project.
- Eileen Park would like to see the rear elevation. Ms. Park said the neighborhood has parking issues and cars speeding down the street while using Peirce as a cut-through street. Ms. Park said that a traffic study is needed in order to address safety in the neighborhood before going forward.
- Jorden Kass said that traffic cut through and parking in the neighborhood are issues for the Town to address as opposed to the developer's issue. Mr. Kass said parking in the neighborhood is allowed.
- Nels Frye said he would love to have the hotel in Arlington Center if the people in the Heights do not want it. Mr. Frye said he would like to see a more interesting design or an eco-dimension that the town can be proud of. Mr. Frye asked to consider how the development could benefit the neighbors.
- Carl Wagner said the development should be a positive change for the neighborhood. He said the commercial development should help residential taxes go down. Mr. Wagner said that the parking situation is not appropriate for this large development. Mr. Wagner said Town Meeting should evaluate the mixed-use rules to allow these types of developments. Mr. Wagner said he hopes the ARB will not approve the project unless the full fees are collected for this project.
- Kristin Anderson said she works on Lowell St. and walks or bike rides to work. Ms. Anderson said the intersection that she tries to avoid is Downing Square and asked that a stoplight be added with all of the additional construction. Ms. Anderson also asked if the circular drive could match the color of the concrete

at the curb cut and the sidewalk with the rest of the driveway to alleviate confusion for pedestrians and drivers.

- Jo Anne Preston said that the plan endangers two large street trees. Ms. Preston said the Tree Warden should be consulted to ensure that there is enough room for the tree root beds. Ms. Preston said bricks are not landscaped open space. Ms. Preston noted that one of the trees that is planned to be cut down is in the protection area and small replacement trees/plants will not have the effect of removing carbon emissions for the hotel site like the existing large tree can.
- (Name unclear on recording) said she was initially excited to hear about the development. The Trust owns the land that is such an eyesore. She would like to see stipulations in the contract or lease to enforce some sort of cleanliness regulations for the site since the current owners are not maintaining the site.
- (Name unclear on recording) asked how late the restaurant will be open and what type of restaurant is planned. She also asked how long the construction is expected to take. Mr. Doherty said the restaurant will be an upscale restaurant but a particular restaurant has not been identified. Mr. Doherty said the restaurant hours will be set by the Select Board. Construction is expected to take about a year, the exterior/envelope construction would be completed first and the interior construction will not have as much of an impact to the neighborhood.
- Jock Hoffman is excited to have an establishment that he can walk to. Mr. Hoffman said he is excited for anything that creates foot traffic in the neighborhood.
- Michael Reilly asked how rodent remediation be addressed in the area. Mr. Reilly said that a traffic study needs to be completed to understand how to improve the intersection. Mr. Reilly asked if the people who run the Trust continue to maintain the site.

The Chair said he would like a detailed site plan with topographical analysis, employee parking plan including off-site parking agreement, and a traffic study to account for those intersections. Mr. Benson asked if a cross walk and handicapped curb cuts should be included in the plan. Mr. Benson asked that Mr. Doherty give the Board a copy of the environmental site assessment report since part of the site used to be a gas station. Ms. Zsembery asked for a detailed assessment of how the plans meet the zoning requirements. The Chair asked the Board about the special permit fee waiver. The Chair said that the applicant has paid 50% of the fees and a 50% waiver of the fee was suggested by the Select Board as part of the RFP to encourage buyers. Mr. Watson said that he is unhappy with the lack of process regarding the offer to waive the fee and cannot support the fee waiver. Mr. Benson said that the fee waiver agreement was part of the RFP the Town put out. Mr. Benson said that Town Counsel said that the Select Board and the ARB have the authority to offer this waiver.

Mr. Benson moved to approve the 50% fee waiver, Mr. Lau seconded, approved 4-1 (Mr. Watson opposed).

Mr. Lau moved to approve the continuation of this Public Hearing for Special Permit Docket #3602 for 1207-1211 Mass Ave Realty Trust to March 16, 2020, Ms. Zsembery seconded, approved 5-0.

The Chair introduced the second agenda item, Environmental Design Review, Continued Public Hearing Docket #3610 Special Permit #3610 filed by Apothca, Inc. at 1386 Massachusetts Avenue.

Phil Silverman introduced himself, Tony Capachietti the project civil engineer, and Joseph Lekach. Mr. Silverman reviewed the updated signage plan. Mr. Capachietti gave an overview of the drop off and pick up plan for customers using rideshare. Mr. Watson said he is concerned that rideshare drivers might still pick up and drop off customers in the street instead of the designated space. Mr. Lekach said that Apothca staff will notify customers that street drop off and pick up is not allowed. Ms. Zsembery asked about the waiting area

for rideshare. Mr. Capachietti said that the parking lot attendants will make sure that customers move to the appropriate waiting area. Mr. Capachietti reviewed the updated plans for the vestibule wall and door, bicycle parking, and parking lot stormwater management including a rain garden. Mr. Silverman said that Apothca gave the Arlington Police Department a Memorandum of Understanding and a plan for handling high volume days.

Mr. Benson asked about the traffic volume study and how the Brookline numbers were used in the study. The Chair opened the floor to members of the public. There were no comments. The Chair said he would accept a motion with conditions. Ms. Raitt reviewed the conditions: waste removal plan, drainage and surface water plan has been reviewed by the Town Engineer, a finalized Memorandum of Understanding, that Apothca is responsible for the cost of any additional police details, the plan to prevent queueing in a public way, more detailed transportation demand management plan, signage directing customers towards the rideshare drop off/pick up area if needed, details to be included in the annual report to the Town.

Mr. Benson moved to approve the Special Permit application as amended, Mr. Lau seconded, approved 5-0.

The Chair introduced the third agenda item, Potential Warrant Articles for submission to 2020 Annual Town Meeting and continued discussion from January 6, 2020. Ms. Raitt reviewed the potential warrant articles.

Mr. Benson moved to approve the warrant articles as drafted for Town Meeting as amended, Mr. Lau seconded, approved 5-0.

Ms. Raitt reviewed the citizen petitions proposed by John Worden, Patricia Worden, and Barbara Thornton. The Chair invited those in attendance to review their proposed warrant articles. Barbara Thornton gave a review of the three proposals she submitted: Accessory Dwelling Units, affordable housing on non-conforming sized parcels, Broadway Corridor design competition. Ms. Thornton explained that Accessory Dwelling Units can be used to create housing that would be available at a price or type not currently available, those residents who are over-housed would be allowed to monetize their homes, and ADUs could be used to create a space to care for sick or disabled family members. Ms. Thornton said that building on non-conforming sized parcels would reduce the size of the current 6,000 square foot requirement. Development on these smaller sites would be allowed if the units created are affordable housing units. Ms. Thornton said that a design completion would attract good developers and architects to build for a range of incomes in Arlington. Mr. Lau asked if there would be funding to support the competition. Ms. Thornton said that the Town would create a RFP with requirements for development and would be required to pay for all advertising.

Steve Revilak proposed that the zoning bylaw be amended to include different terms that describe open space including: open space, open space landscaped, open space private.

The Chair tabled the fourth agenda item, Debrief and follow-up from joint meeting with Select Board on January 13, 2020. This item is scheduled to be discussed at the next ARB hearing on February 3, 2020.

The Chair introduced the fifth agenda item, Open Forum and opened the floor to the public. Chris Loreti said that he did not realize that the Board was looking for citizen articles. Jo Anne Preston asked that the agenda be made clearer because she said that she knows several people who would have like to come to discuss. Ms. Preston said that she was concerned about the term over-housed in Ms. Thornton's ADU proposal. The Chair said that is a conversation Ms. Preston should have with Ms. Thornton since this is a citizen promoted article, not an article submitted by the ARB. Mr. Loreti asked about the parking for the proposed pub in the Heights.

The Chair explained that Mr. Loreti should check with the ZBA regarding the parking variance for the Heights Pub.

Mr. Lau moved to adjourn, Mr. Watson seconded, all voted in favor 5-0.

Meeting adjourned.