Arlington Redevelopment Board
Monday, October 16, 2023, at 7:30 PM
Community Center, Main Hall
27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476
Meeting Minutes

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

PRESENT: Kin Lau (Vice Chair), Eugene Benson, Stephen Revilak

ABSENT: Rachel Zsembery

STAFF: Claire Ricker, Director, Planning and Community Development, Marisa Lau, Senior Planner, Planning and Community Development

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The Vice Chair called the meeting of the Board to order in the absence of the Chair.

The Vice Chair opened with **Agenda Item 1 – Public Hearing: Citizen Warrant Article 13 for Fall 2023 Special Town Meeting.**

ARTICLE 13 – MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRICT (Citizen Article submitted by Wynelle Evans)

Wynelle Evans, Orchard Place, spoke. She submitted this Article but has since realized that she should have submitted an amendment. However, the process of gathering the signatures to get the Article on the Warrant was a worthwhile exercise. She gathered about two and a half times the required number of signatures and talked to a lot of people and got to hear their concerns. She is grateful to the Board for listening to those concerns. The decision to reconsider the building height maximum in the Neighborhood Multi-Family (NMF) District has gone a long way to making people feel heard and helping them feel that this will be a change in town that will be acceptable. She intends to submit an amendment at Town Meeting to further pursue the boundary of the NMF. She will not be pursuing Article 13 unless amendments at Town Meeting reverse the Redevelopment Board's decision about the height of buildings in the NMF.

Mr. Benson asked Ms. Evans if her amendment would include a revised parcel list and map. She said that it would. He also asked if her amendment would maintain a contiguous district of at least five acres, as required by the state. She said that she believes that she has figured out a way to maintain such a district, and that her presentation at Town Meeting will include the acreage.

Mr. Revilak asked Ms. Evans if she would be able to provide capacity calculations, and she said that would.

Mr. Lau asked if her map showing the boundaries would be similar to what has already been shown. She said that she is using the Scenario 3A map used by the Board as her underlying map, and it will show the changes she is making to the Board's proposal. She said that the footprint of the NMF district is being reduced. Mr. Lau said that if her amendment adds parcels, those owners may not have been given proper notice. She said that she spoke with Ms. Ricker, who told her that all property owners within 300 feet of the boundaries of the version of the proposed district presented to the Board on September 11 were notified. Her amendment adds a few parcels, but they are all within 300 feet of the previous boundary, so they have received notice.

The Vice Chair opened the floor to public comment.

- Grant Cook, Wollaston Ave, Precinct 16 – If this were an amendment being debated by the Board, he would encourage the Board to vote No Action. Many compromises have already been made that reduce the capacity of the overlay district, but people keep asking for more. The Board has already made significant changes to the proposal, and the reason given for those changes was to make new development in the NMF more consistent with the existing neighborhoods. If they're consistent with the neighborhood, they should be welcome in the neighborhood. Reducing the boundaries of the NMF to 250 feet from the midline of Mass Ave or Broadway is

change in the wrong direction. He thinks it should go to 450 feet. The plan we have is a good start, and he hopes further change will happen.

- Steve Moore, Piedmont Street – He thinks that 250 feet is a good compromise between those who want no change and those who support the approach that the Board has taken to date. He would like to know what the decrease in capacity is. Mr. Benson said that that question is out of scope, because it is not about what they are doing tonight, which is voting No Action on Article 13 because Ms. Evans does not wish to take it forward. The question about capacity is a question for when she presents her amendment to Town Meeting.

Mr. Benson moved that they recommend No Action on Article 13, and Mr. Revilak seconded. The Board voted and approved unanimously (3-0).

The Vice Chair moved to **Agenda Item 2 – Public Hearing: Docket #3602, 1207-1211 Massachusetts Avenue.**

The Vice Chair noted that because only three Board members are present, they cannot vote on Docket 3602. He would like to reschedule the public hearing on this Docket for a future meeting. He asked the applicant, James Doherty, if he would like to speak. Mr. Doherty said that he is prepared to return at a future date, and he did not feel the need to say anything at this time other what he had said at a previous meeting. Ms. Ricker said that the hearing could be scheduled for the November 6 Board meeting.

Mr. Revilak moved that the public hearing on Docket #3602 be continued to November 6, 2023, at 7:30 pm or such time as the Board shall meet, and Mr. Benson seconded. The Board voted and approved unanimously (3-0).

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 3 – Open Forum.**

- Ann LeRoyer, 12 Pierce Street – She was here to speak on Docket 3602. Mr. Doherty referred to speaking at a previous meeting, and she said that she was not aware of that and wanted to know if there was a record of it. Ms. Ricker said that Mr. Doherty attended the Board meeting on August 28, 2023, and he spoke during Open Forum, when he requested that the Board reopen Docket 3602 in order to extend the Special Permit granted in 2020. His request is reflected in the minutes of that meeting. She said that nothing new about this project has been presented since then. Ms. LeRoyer said that the original Docket Decision said that only one tree was to be cut down, but they have already cut down three trees behind the DAV building. She also said that at least five cars and trucks have been parked on the site for years. She would like to know if the bylaw addressing junk cars has ever been raised or applied. The junk cars are part of the abuse of the property that's been going on for years. Maybe eventually it will be improved with the proposed hotel, but it is currently a terrible-looking site. If the permit will be continued for even longer, she would hope that the town could look into whatever bylaws are applicable to deal with the site. Mr. Benson noted that the Board has no authority over junk cars. Mr. Lau suggested calling the Inspectional Services Department to pursue that issue.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 4 – New Business.**

Ms. Ricker reminded everyone that Town Meeting starts tomorrow night. The first night will include several Articles related to zoning in the business districts. It is not anticipated that Article 12, MBTA Communities Overlay District, will be taken up before Monday, October 23, 2023.

Mr. Revilak asked about the current situation with Calyx Peak, the cannabis dispensary proposed for 251 Summer Street. Ms. Ricker said that the public hearing on Calyx Peak (Docket 3752) is scheduled for November 6, 2023.

Mr. Revilak also asked if the Board had heard from Town Counsel about the voting thresholds for different Articles – which ones require a simple majority and which require a two-thirds majority. Ms. Ricker said that she has been trying to get an answer to that question from Town Counsel.

The Vice Chair asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Benson so moved, and Mr. Revilak seconded. The Board voted and approved unanimously.

Meeting **Adjourned** at 7:50 pm.

DRAFT