

**Arlington Redevelopment Board**  
**Monday, July 14, 2025, at 7:30 PM**  
**Community Center, Main Hall**  
**27 Maple Street, Arlington, MA 02476**  
**Meeting Minutes**

This meeting was recorded by ACMi.

**PRESENT:** Rachel Zsembery (Chair), Eugene Benson, Shaina Korman-Houston, Kin Lau, Stephen Revilak

**STAFF:** Claire Ricker, Director of Planning and Community Development; Sarah Suarez, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development

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The Chair called the meeting of the Board to order.

The Chair opened with **Agenda Item 1 – Review Meeting Minutes.**

June 2, 2025 – The Board members made no changes to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the June 2 minutes as submitted. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

June 16, 2025 – The Board members made no changes to the minutes. The Chair requested a motion to approve the June 16 minutes as submitted. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 2 – Public Hearing: Docket #3849, 259 Broadway.**

Ms. Ricker explained that the applicant is working with the Arlington Historical Commission (AHC), and they have requested that the hearing be continued to August 11, 2025. The Chair said that she attended the last AHC meeting, which included a discussion with the architect of 259 Broadway, but not a formal hearing. At that meeting, the architect shared a revised set of drawings including an enclosed stair, as requested by the Board, which replaced the originally proposed external stair. Because it was not a hearing, the AHC did not formally vote, but they generally supported the enclosed stair. The AHC will hold a hearing for this project in late July.

The Chair asked for a motion to continue the public hearing for Docket 3849, 259 Broadway, to August 11, 2025. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 3 – Public Hearing: Docket #3857, 225 Broadway.**

Ms. Ricker explained that the applicant proposes to demolish an existing two-family dwelling and construct a multi-family dwelling with four (4) units on the property located at 225 Broadway, Arlington, MA, in the R2 Residential District and Massachusetts Avenue/Broadway Multi-Family (MBMF) Housing Overlay District. The application is submitted under the zoning rules of the MBMF Overlay District.

The applicant was represented by architect Peter G. Lewandowski from LR Designs. He said that the design complies with the requirements of the MBMF Overlay District. The proposal is for a four-story, four-unit building, with four parking spaces inside the building at ground level.

Mr. Lau asked about the materials and colors. Mr. Lewandowski said that the windows will have a black frame. The stonework on the bottom will be brick, which matches what is used elsewhere in the neighborhood. The building will also use a clapboard material. The building is larger than neighboring buildings, but they are trying to keep the materials in context with the neighborhood. The portions of the elevations shown in tan will be a horizontal Hardy plank with a 4" exposure. Mr. Lau said that he would like to see a revised plan explicitly stating exactly what materials they will be using. The landscaping plan should also explain exactly what plants in what sizes will be used. Mr. Lewandowski agreed to provide a complete materials list.

Mr. Lau said that he believes that with a four-unit building, one of the units must be accessible. Mr. Lewandowski said that under Group 1 ADA requirements, it has to have potential accessibility, meaning that the unit can be modified to be accessible without structural implications. Mr. Lau said that because the first-floor unit is up several steps, he does not think that it meets the requirement. He noted that whether a project meets standards for accessibility is outside the jurisdiction of the Board, so the applicant will have to determine that by consulting with the Inspectional Services Department. He also noted that the way the parking is currently laid out, none of the parking spaces can be adapted to be accessible without eliminating a space. Mr. Lewandowski said that the bicycle parking can be relocated to allow for a larger parking space. Mr. Lau replied that the applicant would need to show plans and measurements, because that is too significant a change to make after the fact in order to take the project from potential accessibility to actually accessible.

Mr. Lau also noted that the plans seem to include a fair amount of spare space, with rooms that are not clearly marked as designated for any particular use. He suggested taking advantage of that space to reduce the overall size of the building and create larger setbacks. Mr. Lau also noted that the plans include a lot of stairs, and the floor plans could be reconfigured to maximize space by include fewer stairs. That would allow the overall size to be reduced, which would have less of an impact on the neighborhood.

Mr. Lau said that the front façade does not engage the neighborhood. The street level has a garage door and a front door. It would be better with windows as well. The landscaping plan also shows that part of the trash and recycling area is immediately in front of the house, screened by bushes, but with no clear way of accessing it.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that she agreed with Mr. Lau's points. She expressed concern that the parking layout may not be functional, particularly the turning radius required to access the two diagonal spaces on the left. She also expressed concern about the bicycle parking and whether bicycles would be able to easily get in and out of the garage having to maneuver around the cars. She said that in addition to the long-term bicycle parking in the garage, she thinks that the project is also required to include a short-term bicycle space, which is not shown anywhere on the plan.

Ms. Korman-Houston asked if the applicant is introducing any measures to manage stormwater, given that the proposal would significantly increase the impervious surface on the lot. Mr. Lewandowski said that they have not done any engineering calculations yet, but they intend to see what the impact of the building surface area is, and if necessary, they can add a system underneath the rear patios to recharge stormwater to the groundwater. Ms. Korman-Houston said that the Board would like to see more detail about the plan to manage stormwater.

Ms. Korman-Houston asked about the location of mechanical equipment. Mr. Lewandowski said that one option would be to mount compressors on the building high enough to have clearance to walk underneath, and the other would be to mount them at ground level on the south side of the building, where the setback is slightly larger. Ms. Korman-Houston said that she would like to see the locations indicated on the site plan.

Ms. Korman-Houston encouraged the applicant to check with the utility companies about moving utilities underground, because they do not always agree to do that for smaller properties.

Ms. Korman-Houston said that as rendered, the façade is very flat, and she would like to see it further articulated, with information about materials shared with the Board.

Mr. Benson asked if the owner intends to rent or sell the units. Mr. Lewandowski said that he believes they will be for sale.

Mr. Benson asked for clarification about the entrances and locations to all the units. Mr. Lewandowski replied that Units 1 and 2, in the rear of the building, are entered from the side. The staircase from the front entrance leads to Units 3 and 4. Units 1 and 2 are each entered at grade, but they have three floors, with staircases inside the units. Mr. Benson expressed concern that an accessible unit may be required. He said that Mr. Lewandowski should contact the Inspectional Services Department. Mr. Lewandowski said that the units do have internal space that could be used for a lift elevator.

Mr. Benson said that the materials submitted do not include the required solar energy assessment.

Mr. Benson said that the bylaws require that bicycle parking be separated from motor vehicle parking to the extent possible, to minimize the possibility of damage. He recommended that the applicant look at adding a curb or something similar to minimize the likelihood of a collision between a bicycle and a car.

Mr. Benson said that the Board received a letter from resident Christopher Loreti, suggesting that the project does not comply with two of the zoning bylaws, but Mr. Benson believes that Mr. Loreti misread the bylaws. Mr. Loreti said that parking cannot be designed so as to require drivers to back out, but that only applies to areas containing five or more spaces that are not inside a structure. This project proposes four spaces inside a structure. Mr. Loreti also said that the bylaw requires a minimum front yard width of 50 feet, but that applies only in R0, R1, and R2 districts, and not in the Mass Ave/Broadway Multi-Family (MBMF) Housing Overlay District. Because this project is applying under the requirements of the MBMF Overlay District, the 50-foot minimum does not apply.

Mr. Revilak said that the applicant had previously said that the initial concept was 9 or 10 units and commercial space, and he asked why that changed. Mr. Lewandowski said that they would be allowed to do something larger under the bylaw, but that is not what they wanted to do. They always wanted to do something smaller.

Mr. Revilak asked about the sizes of the parking spaces. Mr. Lewandowski said that he believes that all four spaces are full size.

Mr. Revilak asked why an elevator is not required for this project. Mr. Lewandowski said that when units have separate staircases, a common elevator is not required.

Mr. Revilak said that he appreciated the outdoor space on the fourth floor.

Mr. Benson said that the zoning bylaw requires that the "minimum front yard setback areas shall be available for uses such as trees, landscaping, benches, tables, chairs, play areas, art, or similar features." Trash receptacles would therefore not be allowed to be in the front setback. Mr. Lewandowski replied that there is a triangular area in the front that is not part of the setback, and trash barrels could be placed there, with a fence or other screening. Mr. Benson replied that the Board will have to see plans showing that area in detail.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment:

- Asia Kepka, 17 Silk St – She noted that the Town's new trash and recycling receptacles are quite large. There is a bus stop in front of the property, which takes up a significant amount of curb space. The four units will have a total of 8 receptacles, all of which will need to fit along the curb without blocking the bus stop. Snow would further complicate the placement of the bins and clearance along the sidewalk.
- Adam Rodriguez, 285 Mass Ave – Arlington and all of Massachusetts are in the middle of a housing crisis, and he would like to see Arlington do its part to deal with that issue. This project is a step in that direction. He understands the concerns about trash and accessibility, but he thinks this space should be able to support four apartments.
- Joann Cullinane, 69 Newland Rd – She does not think that the parking layout is fully functional. She is also concerned about the visibility of pedestrians as cars will have to back out across the sidewalk. Many children walk to and from school, the Fox Library, and other destinations along this stretch of Broadway, and she thinks that the proposed parking setup is potentially dangerous.
- Catherine McParland, 227 Broadway – She lives next door to this property and is disappointed with the plans. The existing property was damaged in a fire, but she would prefer to see it repaired, rather than torn down and rebuilt. She is concerned about shadows; she lives next door, and the houses in the area are already close together and limit sunlight. She is afraid that a four-story building immediately next door will take away all their yard's sunlight. She is also concerned about privacy. The entrances along the side of the proposed building will be right next to her side yard. She also said that it is extremely difficult to back out onto Broadway; she always backs into her driveway so that she can pull forward out onto Broadway. She does not think that the design of the garage will work with pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles on Broadway, as well as the bus stop immediately in front of the building. The current driveway design has parking in the back which allows more room to maneuver. She is also concerned about trash; she does not think that there will be space in the front for eight bins,

especially if they are separated by three feet, as the new trash company requests, so the applicant might need to consider using a private company for trash and recycling.

- Claudia Hughes, 20 Webster St – Her uncle lives at 223 Broadway, next door to the property. He does not like the plans at all. His father helped build the current building at 225 Broadway. The proposed building is not a good fit for the neighborhood. There are no other flat-top houses in the area. She thinks that a four-story building is inappropriate in this area. She does not think that the parking is feasible or that people will be able to get in and out safely. She also believes that the proposal violates accessibility requirements.
- Andy Wong, 58 Adams St – She lives nearby, and she thinks that this design is appropriate. Arlington has a wide variety of types of designs and sizes of building, so she does not see how adding this building would be incongruent with buildings that already exist along Broadway. She also noted that if people are waiting to take the 87 bus toward Somerville, they are waiting on the other side of the street. Very few riders wait in front of 225 Broadway to take the bus to Arlington Center because it would be easier to walk there.
- Annabelle McParland, 227 Broadway – She lives next door to this project. The proposal is maximizing the space and taking away from the neighbors' property. She thinks that it's too much for the applicant to extend the footprint on all four sides. The design does not fit in with the neighborhood. She would like to see a rendering of the proposal alongside the neighboring houses. She also thinks that it is unreasonable to assume that the residents of a four-family building will only have four cars. They will likely have more cars and park on the street. She understands concerns about affordability, but putting four families in an area that was a two-family house is not going to solve anything.

Seeing no one else who wished to speak, the Chair closed public comment.

The Chair summarized the items that the Board members have requested to see further information about:

- documentation of proposed building materials,
- details of landscape plan,
- materials board,
- need for an accessible unit,
- potential to make one parking space accessible,
- general parking configuration – feasibility of maneuvering in and out of spaces onto Broadway, including a review of parking radii,
- location of EV charger,
- location of short-term bicycle spaces,
- feasibility of maneuvering in and out of long-term bicycle parking spaces within garage,
- consideration of unused space in building to reduce overall massing,
- potential reconfiguration of stairs to a more efficient layout,
- address neighborhood architecture in front elevation, including adding additional articulation to façade, including additional windows,
- address trash removal, which cannot be in front yard setback, including considering new standard sizes of trash and recycling receptacles,
- stormwater management plan,
- solar assessment,
- locations of mechanical equipment onsite, and
- confirmation from utility companies that utilities can be moved underground.

Mr. Lau said that he would strongly discourage locating fan coil units on the side of the building. It would be preferable to put them on the roof, because the sides of the building are extremely close to neighboring properties.

Mr. Lau said that the massing could be significantly reduced by reconfiguring the space without losing square footage. For example, the fourth floor includes open space for two porches. If those were moved to the front of the building, it would provide a setback, which would reduce the massing of the building.

Mr. Lau also said that he would like to see drawings that include the neighboring buildings for scale.

Mr. Benson noted that any shrubbery to be planted on the front must be no more than three feet tall, so that it does not block visibility for drivers backing out.

Mr. Revilak said that it would be good if venting could be included on the roof.

The Chair asked for a motion to continue the hearing for #3857, 225 Broadway, to Monday, September 8, 2025. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

Mr. Benson noted that the applicant will need to provide updated materials to DPCD no later than one week before the hearing, by Monday, September 1, 2025.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 4 – Public Hearing: Docket #3831, 1323 Massachusetts Ave.**

Ms. Ricker explained that this hearing is for Fiesta Bites Pizzeria, for signage. She has been in communication with the tenant, Asael Sanchez, who has been trying to meet the Board's conditions. All the windows have been replaced, and there are no longer any window signs. Mr. Sanchez is working with his sign contractor on the pre-existing cabinet sign. He is unable to contract for new signage due to financial constraints and is seeking some restitution from the sign contractor. Ms. Ricker recommended that Docket 3831 be closed, to allow DPCD to continue to work with Mr. Sanchez on the removal of noncompliant signage and the future installation of new compliant signage. Any proposed new signage will undergo administrative review, and if it is noncompliant, it would be subject to a new public hearing.

Mr. Revilak said that he thought the recommendation to close the hearing is reasonable.

Mr. Benson said that the alternative to closing the hearing would be to continue the hearing for two or three months. If DPCD can administratively approve new signs in that time, then the Board can close the hearing. But if that does not happen, the Board still has an open hearing, as opposed to the applicant having to file a new application.

Ms. Korman-Houston agreed with Mr. Benson. She also asked if Katie Luczai, the Economic Development Coordinator, might have any resources to recommend to Mr. Sanchez. Ms. Ricker replied that Ms. Luczai is working on and seeking funding for a Storefront Improvement Program. She said that she would connect Mr. Sanchez and Ms. Luczai to see if there are any resources available for his storefront.

Mr. Lau agreed with Mr. Benson that it makes sense to keep the hearing open.

The Chair noted that the replacement of the windows has made a huge difference in the appearance of the business. She asked if Mr. Sanchez's landlord paid for the new windows, and Mr. Sanchez replied that they are still negotiating about the costs. He also said that he is considering taking down the portion of the cabinet sign with images of pizza, which the Chair said the Board would appreciate. The Chair also asked about the windows on the side. Mr. Sanchez said that the panels on the side will either be replaced or painted so that they match the rest of the wall. He also said that the lettering of the cabinet sign can be removed, and the size can be reduced, so the name can be centered in the middle two panels, with space on either side. The Chair said that the Board ultimately wants the cabinet sign removed, but they understand that it is not possible yet. In the meantime, having the images of pizza removed from the sign would be a step in the right direction.

The Chair said that she would prefer to keep the hearing open as Mr. Sanchez works through the final items and addresses the cabinet sign. She also noted that because there are two signs above the storefront, the remaining window signs are still more than is allowable.

Mr. Benson moved to continue the public hearing for Docket #3831, 1323 Massachusetts Ave, to Monday, October 6, 2025. Mr. Lau seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 5 – Discussion of 882 Massachusetts Avenue.**

Ms. Ricker explained that DPCD wrote a draft letter highlighting all the Board's concerns with 882 Mass Ave for the Board to review. She also noted that the tenant of the first-floor commercial space contacted DPCD and explained that they have replaced the opaque material on the windows with a lighter colored material. The business is a physical therapist's office, and therefore they need the privacy provided by opaque window coverings. They have also applied for

a sign permit. Ms. Ricker also said that she had a conversation with the developer and his attorney, and they are expecting the letter and are willing to either meet the conditions or provide an explanation as to why they have gone unmet.

The Chair said that the Board can approve window film or covering as part of a signage package if appropriate, but there are ways to include such coverings that help activate the streetscape. The Board would need to see a sign application that included a proposal for the window coverings.

Mr. Benson said that he thinks that the letter does a good job listing the issues, but he suggested revisions to the first paragraph should be rewritten to clarify that the letter refers to a Special Permit. He also suggested breaking signage and transparency into two different bullet points, as they are different issues. He also said that not all the bullet points are clear about exactly what has been done and what needs to be done.

Mr. Lau said that he would like to add additional bullet points to the letter:

- The applicant has not completed the elevation under the first-floor storefront, which is currently exposed CMU.
- The first-floor tenant has installed a wall-mounted compressor on the side of the building facing the neighboring building, which was not approved by the Board.
- The paint on the fascia on the cornice is flaking off or fading.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve the submission of the letter to the property owner, with the suggested additions and corrections, subject to the Chair's approval. Mr. Lau so moved, Mr. Benson seconded, and the Board voted unanimously in approval.

Mr. Lau said that he thinks that the development at 455 Mass Ave is not what the Board approved, and he would like to discuss it at an upcoming meeting. Ms. Ricker agreed to place it on the agenda for the next meeting, on Monday, July 21, 2025.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 6 – Open Forum.**

- Alex Bagnall, 10 Wyman St – He noted that the hearing held earlier in the evening was Site Plan Review for a by-right development. He suggested that when such hearings take place, the Board explain the difference between a by-right development and one which requires a Special Permit.

The Chair moved to **Agenda Item 7 – New Business.**

Ms. Ricker said that she has reviewed Newton's Village Overlay zoning, parts of which could potentially apply to future business zoning in Arlington Heights. It's called Form-Based Code Light, and she thinks that it is an excellent precedent for business zoning. She has shared it with the Arlington Heights Business District Implementation Committee, and she would encourage the Board to take a look at it.

The Chair asked that the selection of the retreat date be on the agenda of the next meeting. The three proposed dates are September 27, October 18, and October 19.

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

Meeting **Adjourned** at 9:00 pm.

#### **Documents used:**

|               |                                                                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Agenda Item 1 | Draft meeting minutes – June 2, 2025<br>Draft meeting minutes – June 16, 2025  |
| Agenda Item 3 | 225 Broadway Site Plan Review Application<br>225 Broadway ARB Impact Statement |

225 Broadway Plans and Drawings Updated 2025-07-10  
225 Broadway Survey 22MAY25  
225 Broadway LEED checklist 2025-06-13  
Docket 3857 225 Broadway – SPR Legal Notice  
SPR memo Docket 3857 225 Broadway 07102025

Agenda Item 4      20250710 Fiesta Bites Update memo

Agenda Item 5      20250710 – DRAFT 882 Mass Ave ARB letter

Correspondence    225 Broadway, Gruber, R – 07022025  
225 Broadway, Holden, E – 07092025  
225 Broadway, Kurnas, S – 07102025  
225 Broadway, Loreti, C – 07112025  
225 Broadway, Ross, C – 07132025  
225 Broadway, Fleming, J – 07112025

DRAFT