



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 15, 2022 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall

City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA

Remote Participation Optional via Zoom

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For a recording of the meeting, visit www.ltc.org

Members Present

Thomas Linnehan, Chairman

Gerard Frechette, Vice Chairman

Richard Lockhart, Member

Robert Malavich, Member

Caleb Cheng, Member

Members Absent

Sinead Gallivan, Member

Others Present

Serena Gonzalez, Assistant Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

7/18/2022

C. Cheng motioned and G. Frechette seconded the motion to approve the minutes. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

II. New Business

Public Shade Tree Hearing – 7 Ruth Street 01851

In Accordance with MGL Ch. 87.5 and Chapter 260 of the Lowell Code of Ordinances, the Lowell Planning Board will hold a public hearing to hear all interested persons about the proposed removal of 1 public shade tree located at 7 Ruth Street. The tree is causing sidewalk panels to lift, and may be causing damage to a sewer connection.

On Behalf:

Mark Burns, the Interim Director of DPW, briefly summarized the issue.

Speaking in Favor:

Robert Ryan, the owner of 7 Ruth Street, spoke about damage the tree is causing to his property.

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

G. Frechette did a site visit and agreed that the tree is causing problems and should be removed.

Motion:

R. Malavich motioned and T. Linnehan seconded the motion to remove the tree. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Site Plan Review — 642 Gorham Street

Steven Crowley has applied to the Lowell Planning Board for Site Plan Review approval to convert a 10-unit building at 642 Gorham Street into an 11-unit building. The subject property is located in the Urban Multi-Use (UMU) zoning district. The proposal requires Site Plan Review approval pursuant to Section 11.4.2 from the Lowell Planning Board.

On Behalf:

Stephen Crowley, the applicant, and Noberto Leon, the architect, spoke on behalf of the project. A commercial unit is being converted to a residential unit.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion: G. Frechette stressed that the unit would have fewer cars than the church that was previously there. He said he is disappointed that commercial space is being converted into residential, but that he understands the need. R. Malavich and C. Cheng expressed their support.

Motion: G. Frechette motioned and R. Lockhart seconded the motion to approve the Site Plan. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Site Plan Review and Special Permit — 14 McIntire Street

Reshape McIntyre, LLC has applied to the Lowell Planning Board to redevelop the existing structure at 14 McIntire Street into 13 residences and 1 approximately 550 sq. ft. commercial space. The property is located in the Neighborhood Business (NB) zoning district and requires Site Plan Review amendment under Section 11.4.2(2) to redevelop the building into more than three (3) dwelling units, Special Permit approval under Section 12.1(e) for the proposed use and under Section 6.1.6 to utilize a publicly owned garage for parking.

On Behalf:

Leo Monteiro (the applicant), John Geary (the applicant's counsel), and Matt Hammar (the project engineer) spoke on behalf of this project. J. Geary summarized the project. M. Hammar gave a presentation on the project. He focused on the parking for the project and traffic safety. M. Hammar briefly spoke on a lighting and sound system that will alert residents leaving the garage on the site that there is traffic coming on the street. L. Monteiro also briefly spoke on the project, and emphasized that all appliances and HVAC will be electric.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

A letter of opposition was submitted by neighborhood residents. They expressed concern regarding traffic, parking, construction noise, and snow and trash removal.

Discussion:

T. Linnehan asked what the plan is for plowing when the garage is blocked. L. Monteiro said there will be property managers on site 24/7 to help address the snow.

L. Monteiro addressed some privacy concerns. He said that the windows will not be located in places that can see in the neighbors' houses, and that the building will not block the sun. He said he is willing to work with neighbors on all of the variables that are within his control.

R. Lockhart asked if they had seen comments from City staff, and M. Hammar said they are amenable to them.

G. Frechette asked about the slope of the entrance to the garage. M. Hammar said that the ZBA conditioned a two (2) foot recess in this case.

C. Cheng inquired about the location where the new street trees will be planted. M. Hammar answered that they will be on Marshall St. J. Geary said that DCR will be planting the trees and the property owner will be maintaining them. C. Cheng asked about the volume of the buzzer on the garage door. J. Geary said it is fully controlled by the property manager.

G. Frechette expressed his support and said it will be a huge aesthetic improvement. He asked how maintenance of the tree will be assured if the property was ever sold. J. Geary said they are happy to condition it. He then asked if they thought about including electric car chargers. L. Monteiro said he will look into it with his electrical engineer.

T. Linnehan asked if there will be an emergency backup for the garage if the power goes out. L. Monteiro said yes.

G. Frechette asked if they would work with DPD to come up with a landscaping plan.

Motion:

G. Frechette motioned, with R. Lockhart seconding, to approve the site plan with the following conditions:

- The same conditions from the Zoning Board of Appeals approval will apply.

- The applicant will remove snow from the site.
- The applicant will have private trash and recycling within the interior of the building.
- The applicant will submit a final landscape plan to DPD.
- The property owner will maintain all trees on site.

The vote was unanimous (5-0).

G. Frechette motioned, with R. Lockhart seconding, to approve the Special Permit incorporating the same conditions as above. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

III. Continued Business

III. Other Business

Special Permit Extension Request: 246.1 Market Street 01852

The applicant is seeking an extension for the Special Permit to convert the existing mill building into residences. The original approvals were issued on June 18, 2020.

On Behalf:

Steve Monahan, representative for the project, spoke briefly.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

None

Motion: T. Linnehan motioned, with R. Lockhart seconding, to approve the extension request. The vote was unanimous (5-0).

Pre-Application Discussion: 113 Walker Street

JJN Realty Trust has applied to the Lowell Planning Board for a Pre-Application discussion. The applicant seeks to demolish the existing structure and construct two buildings with a total of nine (9) housing units. The subject property is located in the Traditional Neighborhood Multifamily (TMF) zoning district. This application would require a Special Permit from the Lowell Planning Board under Article XII to construct more than three (3) units on one lot.

On Behalf:

John Cox, counsel for the applicant, spoke briefly. He emphasized that he met with abutters and DPD staff and has updated his plan.

Speaking in Favor:

None

Speaking in Opposition:

None

Discussion:

All Board members expressed their general support and noted that DPD staff seemed content.

IV. Notices

V. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

G. Frechette noted that NMCOG has a new Executive Director and he had recently been in a productive meeting between NMCOG, the new Director, and City Manager Golden.

VI. Adjournment

R. Lockhart motioned and R. Malavich seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, (5-0). The time was 7:57 PM.