

**BEDFORD PLANNING BOARD
54 Loomis Street Mixed Use Development
Special Permit Public Hearing Minutes**

**Town Hall—Multi Purpose Room/Auditorium
March 19, 2013**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Cohen, Chair; Shawn Hanegan, Clerk;
Sandra Hackman; Amy Lloyd; Lisa Mustapich

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Glenn Garber, Planning Director; Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner; and
Cathy Silvestrone, Planning A.A.

STAFF ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: See Attached

Note: All submittals are available for review in the Planning Office

8:55pm—Shawn Hanegan, Clerk read a Legal Notice stating that the Planning Board will discuss a special permit application for a proposed mixed use development located at 54 Loomis Street in the Depot Area Mixed-Use Overlay District.

Chair Cohen convened 54 Loomis Street Mixed Use Special Permit Public Hearing at 8:56pm.

DELIBERATIONS:

54 Loomis Street—a Special Permit application dated, February 12, 2013, for a 2-story mixed use building and a 2 ½ story residential building and associated parking under Section 18 of the Zoning Bylaws—Depot Area Mixed-Use Overlay District was submitted for Planning Board review.

Chair Cohen, reviewed for the record, the following documentation that was submitted in conjunction with 54 Loomis Street Special Permit application:

- Letter dated, February 11, 2013 from Eugene T. Sullivan, P.E./Consulting Engineer providing a description of the project. Attached to this letter; Special Permit application and Site Plan Application & Check List dated, February 12, 2013 and Plan Set dated, February 7, 2013 consisting of sheets: C.1, C.2, C.3, C.4, L.1, A-1, A-2, and A-3.
- Memo dated, March 15, 2013 from Catherine Perry, Assistant Planner, regarding 54 Loomis Street, Bedford Apartments Depot Area Mixed Use Overlay District Special Permit revised design.
- Letter dated March 12, 2013, from Adrienne St. John, Public Works Engineer and Kristin Dowdy, Civil/Environmental Engineer offering DPW comments on the proposed mixed use buildings at 54 Loomis Street.
- Email dated, March 12, 2013, from Marc Saucier, Traffic Enforcement Officer, stating that the Police Department doesn't have any issues with the proposed development.
- Fire Access Sketch (labeled 3e)

- Emails from *neighbors dated, between January 20-January 21, 2013 sharing various concerns about the project (mainly concerned with the number of rental units proposed). *Renu Bostwick, 23 Hartford St., Sheena Santos, 29 Hartford St., Ellen Powers, 27 Hartford St., Kristina Philipson, 22 Hartford St., Rao Varada, 53 Loomis Street and Cheryl Carlson, 26 Hartford St.
- Email dated, March 14, 2013 from resident, John Stella sharing his opposition of the proposed project to build apartments at 54 Loomis Street
- Email dated, March 14, Kelly Craven, 17 Norma Road, sharing support for the retail and residential project proposed at 54 Loomis Street.

The following are members of the development team that were present:

- Eugene Sullivan, 230 Lowell Street, Suite 2A, Wilmington, MA (Civil Engineer)
- David and Debbie Cerundolo, 6 Powers Court, Lexington, MA (Property Owner)
- Dan Broggi, 5 Lowell Avenue, Winchester, MA (db2/Architecture)
- Lori Tambone and Richard Tambone, Tambone Investment Group, (Developer)
- Attorney, Mark Vaughn ,Riemer/Braunstein

Eugene Sullivan, Civil Engineer, (Eugene T. Sullivan, Inc.) reviewed the current Special Permit application for 54 Loomis Street dated, February 12, 2013 outlining significant changes from the original Special Permit application dated, June 19, 2012, in response to concerns raised during July 17, 2012 Planning Board Public Hearing, comments from a neighborhood meeting (hosted by the developer) on August 29, 2012, and feedback from an informal discussion with the Planning Board on January 22, 2013. Mr. Sullivan highlighted some changes to the original proposal as follows:

1) the new project consists of two buildings; the front building closest to Loomis Street will have two stories and the rear building 2.5 stories in an effort to reduce mass and bulk, and to provide an improved visual effect from the street; **2)** the total number of apartment units were reduced from 30 to 23 units and the number of bedrooms lowered from 50 to 35; **3)** retail space increased to approx. 2,860 SF; **4)** improvements were made to vehicular and pedestrian circulation on site; **5)** additional landscape was provided; **6)** infiltration under the parking lot was incorporated to improve drainage; and **7)** the number of parking spaces were reduced from 51 to 46 spaces. Mr. Sullivan also informed the Board that the development team will continue to work with DPW Engineers to address concerns outlined in their March 12, 2013 memo; and with the Fire Department to ensure turning radiuses meet the requirement.

Dan Broggi, Architect (db2/Architecture), shared the following additional information about the project:

- First building/closest to Loomis Street will consist of retail with housing above; there will be two 2-bedroom apartments and one 1-bedroom apartment and 4 townhouses. The retail portion of the building will have glass storefronts and these glass fronts will continue to wrap around the driveway side of the building.
- Second building/to the rear of the site will be 2.5 stories and will consist of ten 1-bedroom apartments and six 2-bedroom apartments. The highest peak on this building is around 34ft and is similar in height to other houses in the area as an effort to reduce the appearance of an apartment building.
- Three existing maples trees located in the front of the site (near Loomis St.) will be removed and replaced by three sizable trees that will be planted in new locations, but still in front of the site.

- A sketch was provided showing a courtyard from another location and Mr. Broggi noted that they tried to depict this style courtyard for the project.
- Sketches of other buildings in the area were provided to compare the size and shape of the proposed buildings.
- Mr. Broggi pointed out the following design features and amenities that were proposed: clapboard siding, overhang single roofs, dormers, gables, glazed storefronts, use of different façade materials, decorative rails and balconies, inclusion of a plaza area with potential tables & chairs, plus additional parking to the back side of the site.

Mr. Broggi summarized information from the town's Architectural Review Guidelines and then explained how he incorporated some of those suggested design features from these guidelines into the architectural plans so as to create a project that would be harmonious to the existing neighborhood.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

Shawn Hanegan ask the developer if they would change the signage from directing bicycle traffic around the site on the sidewalks to the Minuteman Bikeway to a sign directing cyclists to *walk their bicycles* through the center walkway to get to the Minuteman Bikeway in efforts to provide a virtual connection between the Narrow Gauge and Minuteman trails, even if there is no dedicated right of way, and also to improve safety for those that would bike through the area anyway.

The developer agreed to replace the previously proposed bicycle sign with a new sign directing cyclist to walk their bicycles through the center walkway to get to the Minuteman Bikeway.

Sandra Hackman asked if shared parking had been considered for this site.

Eugene Sullivan replied; no...not at this point.

Lisa Mustapich asked for details on the affordable housing component of the project.

A reply of two of the twenty-three units (10%) will be affordable housing units.

Chair Cohen asked the developer if they reduced the number of housing units as far as they could.

Eugene Sullivan stated that the front building will be marketed as condos first; and then later see if it's possible to market the second building the same.

Chair Cohen requested that the snow storage area (located out front) be relocated because it's currently near a hydrant. Mr. Cohen also said he would like the style of the back building to depict the appearance of the Depot area more.

Mr. Broggi commented that Mashpee Commons was used as a model to come up with the design for this site; and that the idea was to keep the appearance of the site progressive and modern, yet still fit within the classical look of the area.

Amy Lloyd expressed that progress was made with the front building; however she would like to see more variation in the design of the back building to break up the mass so the building better fits in the spirit of the area.

Lisa Mustapich suggested further reviewing the look of the neighborhood when incorporating design features; and also shared that adding mullions to the upper windows was a good idea.

Shawn Hanegan if the concept behind proposing floor to ceiling glass on the front building was to attract a certain type of retail.

Mr. Broggi said they incorporated a lot of glass to maximize the storefront so that people driving by could look into the windows and possibly be enticed to come in.

Sandra Hackman mentioned that the front building appears to have too much glass and that she would like to see less glass and more bushes/greenery included.

Chair Cohen asked if the parking calculations account for retail becoming a restaurant.

Mr. Sullivan replied; not at this point, but if that should happen they would return to the building inspector.

Chair Cohen asked if the proposed lighting would avoid overspill to neighboring properties.

Mr. Sullivan said that there will be pole mounted lighting located in faraway corners on site; and some additional lighting near the walkways that will have full-cut off features.

ABUTTERS & RESIDENTS COMMENTS

Leo Kenen, 40 Loomis Street, shared his disappointment regarding the proposed project. Mr. Kenen professed that the project doesn't fit the spirit of the Depot Area Mixed Use Bylaw; and then he recited language regarding the intent of the bylaw while comparing it to the project.

Alethea Yates, 37 Shawsheen Road, commented that the site doesn't appear to have enough parking for the number of housing units and retail that is proposed. Chair Cohen reviewed the proposed parking calculations that were provided for the site.

Eileen Hickey, 29 Webber Avenue, conveyed that the current design looks better compared to before, commented that the developer is trying; and then suggested that the developer considering scaling the project down a bit further to better fit the neighborhood.

Peter Cooper, 55 Loomis Street, asked; if a restaurant occupies retail space where would the dumpsters be located. Mr. Cooper was concerned about rodents.

Chair Cohen explained that the Board of Health has rules and regulations relating to this.

Sean Tierney, 29 Hartford Street, stated that given the number of housing units proposed it doesn't have a village feel.

Joy Kenen, 40 Loomis Street, referring to the number of units proposed, commented that it's not the residents problem whether the developer makes a profit or not; and that she worries more about traffic and safety.

Cheryl Milroy, 7 Winthrop Avenue, communicated that she was pleased condos were included in the housing mix; however, she voiced that 23 units are still too many and that the overall project is too big for this area.

Ken Larson, resident and business owner (34 Hartford St.) spoke about the classical look of the area; and then shared what elements he personally plans to incorporate in the redevelopment of his building located at 111

South Road (former lumber yard), which is also located in the Depot area. Mr. Larson suggested that the developer could research railroad architectural areas to get some design ideas that would better serve the vernacular of the neighborhood and attract people to the site, rather than creating a strip-mall look.

Christina Phillips, 23 Hartford Street, commented that she applauds the vision for the Depot area and likes the Architectural Review Guidelines. Ms. Phillips further commented that the Depot area already has commercial property, and pointed out that it's located near a very busy/ dangerous corner and therefore, if we really want to develop a pedestrian friendly area, then we need to review the safety of the entire area and not just a particular site.

William Moonan, Selectman, said the town wants to make this area touristy and that the Minuteman Bikeway has been a draw. Selectman Moonan also shared that the town is in the process of obtaining a grant to improve the freight house which will also enhance the area. Mr. Moonan urged the developer to consider changing the proposed glass storefronts to cozier retail fronts, and then provided Mr. Broggi with some illustrations.

Virginia Whiteside, 25 Hartford Street, stated that she appreciates the developer trying to move forward from the first proposal, and that she agrees with the concept of the Depot Area Overlay Mixed Use bylaw; however, she doesn't see how the current proposal integrates with this overlay district. Ms. Whiteside further stated that the proposed development does not have a village feel, nothing is connecting and it is still too massive.

Elizabeth Brosgol, 57 Loomis Street, remarked that the project is proposing too much residential and that more retail should be included.

Amruthavalli Raja, 53 Loomis Street, voiced that the amount of glass proposed for the storefronts and the lighting doesn't fit in the neighborhood, and further voiced that her family moved from Cambridge to Bedford to avoid this kind of environment.

Anne Gardsbane, 39 Winthrop Avenue, articulated that the project's scale is still too massive and that the back building is disingenuous to the principle of the Depot Area Overlay Mixed Use bylaw. Ms. Gardsbane expressed that this is not a safe area for kids, 23 apartments in this small area is too many, the amount of landscape doesn't meet the requirement of the bylaw, and overall she believes the project should fail.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

Amy Lloyd said; although the developer has made some positive changes to the proposal, this site is very challenging and has challenging requirements within the newly adopted bylaw; and therefore she suggested that the developer is not quite there and should further review its options.

Shawn Hanegan complimented the developer and stated that there have been vast improvements since the July review and agrees with Ms. Lloyd that the project isn't there yet; however, going forward with condos is favorable. Mr. Hanegan said he would like to continue discussions and urged the development team to listen to the neighbors' concerns regarding the promotion of a village feel development.

Lisa Mustapich acknowledged that being first to implement a new bylaw is tough; and then suggested that the developer take to heart what Ken Larson and Selectman Moonan suggested. Ms. Mustapich also suggested that the development include more of a mix within the development because at this point, the mix is not what she envisions for the area.

Sandra Hackman expressed that it is hard to expect everything people envision to happen all on one lot; and that the area as a whole needs more work. Ms. Hackman explained that because everything is piecemealed in this

area; it makes it tough for a developer. Ms. Hackman added that the buildings need to be smaller, more green space is needed, and she would like to see additional retail included in the back building. Ms. Hackman pointed out that the alternative to the current proposal is that a developer could build a 2.5 story commercial/industrial building under as-of-right use zoning. Ms. Hackman commented that long-term renting has been a choice these days; and that renting shouldn't be considered as evil. Ms. Hackman cautioned people to keep an open mind and keep with the big vision of revitalizing the area.

Chair Cohen stated that he understands the challenge to redevelop this area; however a vision for the district is needed and not just for a particular site.

Board members suggested that the developer reassess their current proposal and incorporate ideas that were discussed this evening.

MOTION: Lisa Mustapich move to continue 54 Loomis Street Special Permit Public Hearing to May 1, 2013. (Sandra Hackman seconded the motion)

VOTE: 5-0-0

TIME: 10:30PM