



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 24, 2018 6:30 p.m.

City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall

City of Lowell, 375 Merrimack St, Lowell, MA

Note: These minutes are not completed verbatim. For further detail, contact the Division of Development Services, 375 Merrimack Street, Lowell.

Members Present

Thomas C. Linnehan, Chairman

Gerard Frechette, Member

Richard Snetsky, Member

Jordan Gys, Associate Member

Members Absent

Richard Lockhart, Member

Robert Malavich, Member

Others Present

Patrick Burns, Associate Planner

A quorum of the Board was present. Member Lockhart and Member Malavich were absent.

I. Minutes for Approval

1/7/2019

Chairman Linnehan made a motion to approve the 1/7/2019 meeting minutes. R. Snetsky seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the Board, (4-0).

II. Continued Business

Site Plan Review & Special Permit: 493 and 509 Market Street

An application was submitted by Mar-Sac Realty Trust seeking Site Plan Review, Special Permit, and Variance approval at 493 & 509 Market Street. The applicant proposes to construct a three-story mixed use structure on a vacant parcel. The proposed project is located in the Urban Mixed Use (UMU) zoning district. The project requires Site Plan Review approval under Sec. 11.4, a Special Permit under Article 12: Table of Uses, and any other relief required.

Speaking on behalf of the applicant:

Gregory Curtis, Attorney for the applicant: This is a continuation of the meeting from Jan 7th. The building will contain mixed use with 4 commercial units and 15 residential units.

We've made changes to the site plan and received some comments on those. This project received parking variances from the ZBA. There is parking that's available not too far with the Dummer St. lot and the Ayotte Garage, it seems to be adequate. Commercial parking will be on the street. There are metered spaces on both sides. Those should be sufficient. There is also parking on Dummer Street.

I want to go through some comments made. We submitted revised plans with more details on drainage and we show the dimensions for access on the property in the rear. We are also showing 2 dumpsters as required with ZBA. Those would also be screened with signs for no parking. We also show bike rack on the premises.

The additional information on the drainage was provided by the engineer with drainage grates that would bring water from the front of the property back to the cal tech systems underground.

We think it's a good fit and continuation with what the whole Acre neighborhood looks like. It is going to be a sided building. We need to go before Historic Board for final approval on materials and colors. This has been empty for some time. It will be great to have housing and commercial space. We will file an RDA with the Conservation Commission because the project is 92 ft. from the canal.

T. Linnehan: Last time, we talked about fire comments, but I believe we received a letter in favor?

Staff: Yes that's included on the comment memo on the second page from the Fire Dept.

Greg Curtis: Yes, I saw that they didn't have an issue because of the fact that they can access the building in the front. We also talked about snow removal because there is no storage. Snow will be removed offsite and we have private trash and recycling pickup.

Speaking in favor: None

Speaking against: None

Discussion:

Member J. Gys: I have one question that I had last time. What type of commercial units have you been leaning towards? Is there any progress with that?

Alan Kazanjian: We don't, we have talked with the city if they have ideas at this time. But no, we don't have any.

Member R. Snetsky: Looking at my notes from December 3rd and subsequent meetings on Jan 7th, I see everything has been addressed. Even though it was not included in staff comments, we have an email from Deputy Chief Casey that because there is access on 3 sides, that it was okay, also because there will be sprinklers. You have made the dumpster location more clear, I have no further issues.

Member J. Frechette: We received all of the info. that we were looking for last time. You've answered all the questions. I like the look of building. It's interesting when there's a project that requires Historic Board approval as well. I guess I would be looking for in our decision for DPD to include that the Planning Board strongly urges the Historic Board to keep the look of the building, the number of windows and how that project was presented to us. I just want to make sure that's the spirit of this project.

My understanding is that the sidewalks will be addressed as part of the bridge project, but if not, I would like a condition that the applicant will complete that.

Atty. G. Curtis: Whatever is not completed by the bridge project, we will complete sidewalk construction to the recommendations of engineering and DPW.

Chairman T. Linnehan: No other comments I know you've addressed sidewalk concerns. I was happy we got the letter from the Fire Dept. I know the plans have been updated and I have no concerns with the project. I think it will be a good one.

Motion:

Member J. Frechette made a motion for approval of Site Plan Review with the following condition:

1. If the sidewalks in front of the subject property are not restored with the ongoing bridge construction project, the applicant will restore them to city standards.

The motion was seconded by Member J. Gys with unanimous approval by the Board, (4-0).

Member J. Frechette made a motion to approve the Special Permit with the following conditions:

1. If the sidewalks in front of the subject property are not restored with the ongoing bridge construction project, the applicant will restore them to city standards.
2. The Planning Board strongly urges the Historic Board to maintain the look of the structure that was presented to the Board including the windows and rhythm of windows.

The motion was seconded by Member R. Snetsky with unanimous approval by the Board, (4-0).

III. **New Business**

ReZone: Extending Regional Retail (RR) 55 Phoenix Avenue 01852

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40A, Section 5, the Lowell Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing to hear all interested persons relative to an ordinance to amend "The Code of Ordinances City of Lowell, Massachusetts," with respect to Chapter 290, thereof entitled "Zoning." The amendment would extend the adjacent Regional Retail (RR) zoning district to include the parcels located at 55 Phoenix Avenue, 75 Phoenix Avenue, and 77-81 Phoenix Avenue, which are currently within the Light Industrial (LI) zoning district.

Speaking on behalf of the applicant: Atty. Jim Bowers:

I am representing the owners of properties on Phoenix Ave; the owners being Phoenix Ave, LLC. This property has been in the family of Ms. Warren since 1997. The property is in the LI zone abutting the regional retail district behind Rogers Street. The property has been an auto business or truck repair and truck depot. There is a building fronting the property which is 55 Phoenix Ave. There is a picture of the building provided by Ms. McCall, Attachment C. This is the area that my client is asking to rezone.. Historically, it's been a truck auto oriented use, the property owners built the structure to house cars. There was a fire there, right now, there is just a cement pad. Mr. Matthews died in 2013. His children began doing work on the property and worked with city to bring the property up to code. From 2013 to 2017, the property has been vacant. Since 2017 it has been leased to do training videos and audio work on the first floor. The second floor is vacant. They have been approached for 3 years for various retail uses, most recently, for a retail marijuana dispensary. Last year, the City Council approved use of retail marijuana dispensaries in RR and OP zones. We are seeking to change the zoning for parcels of land from Light Industrial to Regional Retail so that they could lease the space and make optimal use of it. The building is up to code and has handicap access.

This is a picture of the building. It's a 2-story building. The first floor is currently leased and the second floor has been vacant since 2013. The whole building is looking to change to regional retail. Included are images showing available parking.

These other diagrams the building I just showed is 55 Phoenix. This building sits on all three lots which is why we are petitioning to rezone all three parcels. The next picture is a blown up map of the city zoning. You see where there is Regional Retail along Rogers Street. The purple property in the middle is the area we are talking about. It is abutted by the east and north by RR. This picture here is a picture the property on Phoenix Ave to show approximately 82% is wetlands. It's a large lot, but as far as use, it is limited. Principally, it's the 55 Phoenix Ave location that my client is looking for regional retail zoning, but we are requesting a rezone for all three parcels because the buildings site on all three lots. The last photo is a satellite view showing the various fast food restaurants, car places, and Hannaford's.

My client is asking to have the area rezoned to have a better use so they can better utilize property. Every prospective tenant who has expressed interest has a retail component and my client has not been able to lease that spaced because it's not allowed in an industrial zone.

Chairman T. Linnehan: We are only a recommending party with a nonbinding decision. We make a recommendation to City Council either in favor or against rezone.

Speaking in favor:

None

Speaking against:

Nancy Pitkin, 26 Waverly Ave: I don't see an issue to rezone from light industrial to Regional Retail. I think all of us here tonight agree with that.

Chairman T. Linnehan: Once City Council makes decision on zoning. It then depends what can go back to the board for review. If it's a salon, it probably doesn't, but for recreational marijuana, it has to go back before the board.

Atty. Bowers: Yes, we would also have to have neighborhood meeting. And we would need a Special Permit and Site Plan Review for recreational marijuana.

They are looking for a better use of property. The building itself would be dressed up as far as curb appeal. It fits within the area as it surrounded by Regional Retail zoning.

Discussion:

Member R. Snetsky: Forgetting about the proposed actual use, the zoning was created with different goals in mind. Much of the area around has been designated Light Industrial. Staff comments indicate there are not many properties left in Light Industrial. Because he has a particular use in mind, I don't think it's necessary a good idea to change zoning for that reason. Now let's consider the proposed use, in addition to all legal hurdles, the host agreement and all of that, you have traffic, parking, public safety concerns. For those reasons I can't support this petition.

My client has been proposed to lease space for recreational marijuana use. They have done work on property in hoping of find a tenant and have been unsuccessful. While it looks like a large parcel, less than 20% can be used because it consists of wetlands and is in floodplain zone. I understand the board concerns with loss of industrial property. As a result of development on rogers street I believe that area became wetlands. I don't know when corridor became light industrial, but much of it couldn't be used. As far as your concerns, I understand, if the next proposed use was a marijuana facility, they would have a lot of hurdles,. If the company was not successful, my client still wants a regional retails use to gain attraction to the property.

J Gys, : Can you clarify the business on the first floor with the multiple signs.

Attorney: There is more than one sign. Beantown Production Company is a film company operated by police state troopers as a private company. The principal is troop chief Alejandra and she is the head of training. The business has a private business where they do training video. Her husband is also a trooper. Beantown Production Company has entire first floor. There is also a charity organization for the wives and children of killed officers. It is all Beantown production company but they run several things.

J. Gys: R. Snetsky and I very rarely disagree. He is a great mentor on the board. I am comfortable moving forward with this because 70% of land is not usable for light industrial use.

J. Frechette: Light industrial is a very specific use. In some of our light industrial zones it is not easy to get material to and from. Part of the appeal that this area has light industry and regional retail is because there is easy access to highways. When this was rezoned, in 2006, the existing use was taken into consideration and preserving as much light industry as possible. A large portion is within 100 yr. floodplain however it's the same challenge for regional retail zoning district. I do see the regional retail district across the street and it would square it off. It does create a creep affect into the light industry area, potentially creating a problem with competing uses. It's not an easy decision. I understand where Mr. Snetsky and Mr. Gys are coming from. We are making a non-binding decision with the City Council. Retaining light industry was a top priority in our master plan. It's not a straight forward decision from the board's perspective. I would have to say at this juncture, I don't think you've made a case to change the zoning to regional retail. You talked about the owner having a hard time finding tenant but you haven't talked about the master plan and how its meets the goals of the master plan.

Atty. Bowers: At one point this was a large auto salvage lot. I think when you think about light industrial, you think about using a large area of property. Because of the issues with the wetlands, you need space; it is very difficult to make good use of the property. The existing uses would remain in place. We would not be looking to change those. It is not my client's intention to relocate them.

J. Frechette: When you are looking at regional retail, you could have the same argument. Usually, regional retail is for big box stores with large impervious surface areas. I don't see the benefit to change from light industry to regional retail. Without an overwhelming reason, especially with the location so close to highway, the site would be great for manufacturing. Regional retail requires a lot of parking which this site might also not allow for. I am leaning towards not recommending a rezone.

T. Linnehan: The first floor is not really a light industrial use.

Atty. Bowers: It's an allowed use, they are not there every day. They do some filming and audio use. When my clients were in possession of the property, it was the only attraction we were able to get. Prospective tenants were all looking for some commercial retail use. The building is going to remain as is. For the most part, it will probably remain vacant.

T. Linnehan: I understand both arguments. Ultimately the City Council will decide on the rezone. I'm willing to vote in favor.

Motion:

Chairman Thomas Linnehan motioned and Member Jordan Gys seconded to issue a POSITIVE recommendation on the proposed rezone.

Member Gerard Frechette motioned and Member Richard Snetsky seconded to issue a NEGATIVE recommendation on the proposed rezone.

T. Linnehan: This will be voted on the January 29th City Council agenda.

Site Plan Review & Special Permits: 42 Highland Street 01852

An application was submitted by Southern End Realty seeking Site Plan Review, and two (2) Special Permits to construct two (2) duplexes behind the existing structure in the Traditional Neighborhood Multi-Family (TMF) zoning district. The proposed project requires Site Plan Review under Section 11.4 because of the proposed four (4) residential units and a Special Permit under the Table of Uses, Article XII, Section 12.1 (d). The project also requires Special Permit approval under Section 6.7 for a driveway that exceeds 200 linear feet and any other relief required of the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

On behalf of the project:

Matt Hamor, LandPlex Engineering

Offered Comments:

John McDonough, 26 Highland Street

Doreen Lomme, 76 S Highland Street

Peter Hirmer, 48 Highland Street

Rowena Hirmer, 48 Highland Street

Frank Gorham, Southern End Realty

T. Linnehan: We only have 4 board members, because you are requesting a Special Permit, we can continue the matter for a full board or you can go forward tonight.

M. Hamor: We'll see how it goes. We have no problem continuing we've had conversations with abutters regarding the vegetation on the site. We have minor things that we're doing with the sewer dept. which we made modifications but we still have to get to the sewer dept. If the board feels they have everything, you could vote but if it makes sense to continue we can do that.

T. Linnehan: So you want to open up the hearing?

M. Hamor: Yes we'll do that.

Speaking on behalf of the applicant:

Matt Hamor, LandPlex Engineering: We've met before for a pre-application site plan review meeting. We took in some recommendations and incorporated those into the design plan. We've had multiple meetings with DPD regarding the circulation internally. We've had further discussions with the historic dept. related to the look and feel to the duplex.

The existing 2 family is on Highland St. There's an access drive on the right side. There's a paved area that goes out to the rear of the site. There are some outbuildings and otherwise the land is pretty clear with various landscaping throughout the property. We are proposing a 14' access drive. The requirement is 12 ft. we'd like to widen it to 14'. There will be 4 spaces in the rear to accommodate the existing building in the front on Highland Street. Mr. Gorman already has been preserving and renovating that building. There will be a walk adjacent to those 4 spaces. The drive will continue to an interior isle for access to each duplex. Each duplex will have 4 parking spaces. We are in surplus of required parking. This wider aisle is 6' wider than normal which helps with turnaround for an emergency vehicle of which I have submitted a turning radius plan for the fire truck. One of the comments made by sewer dept. was to show snow storage, we have ample amount of green space for snow storage. We feel we have plenty of area for that. We are adding a walkway that came up during a previous discussion. I think it was Mr. Frechette that was talking about an interior walkway to connect us down here so they can come out onto the street. There is significant reduction in runoff from the site to the neighboring property and to the street. We have a detailed drainage plan, a lot of infiltration on site. One of the comments that came up is from the Fire Dept. because the driveway is greater than a 150' and they like to see a 20 ft. access drive. In the NFP regs. if the buildings are sprinklered, that requirement is not as stringent so we will be adding sprinklers and that sufficed the fire dept.

With the proposed buildings, we've added some doghouse dormers on the roof line. We added some cornices added some additional elements on top of entrance ways and to the garage. We've vetted the design with Stephen Stowell and he fully supports the design changes made. Working on original design, Mr. Stowell said this met the intent of the goals for development in the historic district. Mr. Gorman will fully restore existing structure. I can answer any questions.

Speaking in favor:

None

Speaking against:

John McDonough, 26 Highland St. I would like to thank the board for their service to the community. I am happy to know that they are going to sprinkle the buildings. Are we going to sprinkle the original building?

Frank Gorman: We didn't plan to, if it's required we will, but new buildings will have sprinklers.

J. McDonough: Backing up on Highland St. is almost impossible as the neighborhood gets chewed up with condos. I don't like the one way in - one way out. I would like to see driveway on both sides. I think with all the cars probably on the property, I think there is room for that.

I also already talked to Frank about this, but who would be cutting grass 25 years from now on the property?

M Hamor: The driveway requires 12 ft. in this district. We are increasing to 14. We are providing pull offs. What we've done is provide an extra space behind the 4 spaces of the existing building. I think adding another driveway would detract the look of the property. It might also take a parking space from Highland Street requiring an additional curb cut. There is also a bit of a drop there with a stone curb before the sidewalk. There would be some challenges to create a drive and I think it would detract from this house.

T. Linnehan: Wasn't there discussion of access in the rear?

M. Hamor: There is a 25' wide access. The Lowell Housing Authority owns that property. There isn't really good access. I looked at the deed and it's not specifically there for our benefit. This property does have this drive but not for our use.

J. McDonough: It's a steep drive back there. The reason for those walls was to keep the horses on the property. Horses will not step down. That's why there is a wall along those property lines. All those families who used to live back there were related. Where I live, we needed to make the driveway wider. With the equipment out there today, they should have no trouble.

M. Hamor: I'm not saying there's trouble.

McDonough: I'd rather complain now because it's impossible to back up on Highland St.

M. Hamor: Having this extra space was meant for turning around. No one would be backing out on Highland St. Everyone would be coming straight out. Yes, the development is 6 units but it's not beyond a point for a need to have a wide drive. This is the way the regs. are set up. We feel there are areas that give everyone a point of site. It hasn't come up as a comment yet. There will be a full homeowners association, the individual owners will put money in the association and there will be a fee and an outside management co. that would manage snow clearing, cutting grass, and maintaining the property. That will be a recorded instrument requiring them to cut the grass.

Doreen Lomme, 76 S Highland St.: My street is parallel to Highland street. My house looks directly to the rear of this property. I'm concerned with lighting. My home is inundated with lighting from Highlans St. I have put up light blocking blinds, black out curtains. If there is any other lighting directed to my home, I'm not going to be able to block it out. I have 5 street lights from Highland St. directed directly to my bedroom. I have a street light beside my home. I have the home lights from my neighbor across the street flashing in my home. Plus, you put all of these LED lights. My street is like daytime at night. I don't need to put lights on in the hall it's already lit up. I want to know what you plan on doing for lighting. And are you planning on removing all the trees on the back end because that's a good block out.

M. Hamor: The trees in the back are going to stay. We would be proposing down facing lighting going in the garage and the side could be light blocking. These would be motion sensing lights above the garage. They would be on for approx. 5 minutes and downward facing. The other thing with these designs is that the entrances are recessed in. There would be lighting just to come in the front doors. I would guess that you would not see the lights. The buildings face each other. We're illuminating the porch area.

D. Lomme: I was afraid you'd be adding street lights.

M. Hamor: We are not having street lights. We would just have sensor lights on garage that would be up for 5 minutes. The lights will be downward facing. It's getting difficult to sleep in my home. Even the blackout curtains barely work.

Peter Hirmer, 48 Highland St, I am right next door. I have talked with Frank. His wife taught my son at the Shaunnessey School. We're not here as badgers. We have a couple questions. We have some trees that we share on the property line. We are concerned with it coming down. We are concerned with snow storage and how much salt is going to be in that snow storage considering it's a small space between their property and ours. I would like to see drainage plans to see how we are reducing runoff. If we are digging out cellars, I am concerned about what are we going to do if you hit ledge there are huge boulders out there. How much vibration will that cause? And what about fencing?

M. Hamor: I just gave your wife a set of the design plans and drainage. We met with sewer dept. and we added a catch basin along the entrance drive located near the front driveway and tie into the sanitary sewer. We added that to reduce the runoff even more. One of the comments that came in was to review the landscaping itself. There's a whole line of trees along the property line. It's our intention to save virtually all of them. There is one tree that is quite large and it is sticking out a bit. We are not doing a lot of grading. We don't have a problem making it narrower if it meant saving the tree because 12' is the requirement. We can meet with Mr. Hirmer and his wife on site and see how it may affect the property.

Regarding the snow storage, there is going to be little to no storage on that right side besides some of the plowing that may be pushed to the side. A lot of it is geared towards going to the end of the drive. After that, there may be some salting. The salt would be picked up by runoff and go into the catch basin and into the subsurface drainage systems. I don't think your property will be impacted.

M. Hamor: If the board is amenable to narrowing the driveway to save a tree, we can do that. We were trying to give more width to make it as wide as we could with the 12' requirement.

T. Linnehan: How do you want to do this? Do you want to meet with the neighbors?

F. Gorman: Would you like to meet on site?

P. Hirmer: Yes, let's do that.

M. Hamor: That would be fine.

P. Hirmer: And what about the boulders back there? There are huge boulders.

M. Hamor: We did test pits. We did 4 test pits. There is a bit of rock ranging from 6 ft. and then out back there is nice sandy material on the site itself. We know about rocks and they will be disposed of accordingly. If we encounter them we still install catch basins and things of that nature.

M. Hamor: We've already made changes to the plans per the sewer dept. comments. I just wanted to make sure nothing was going to be added after this meeting.

T. Linnehan: What was the main concern?

M Hamor: They wanted an additional catch basin and other standard stuff.

P. Hirmer: I was concerned about physical vibrations from removing those stones.

M. Hamor: If there are any techniques that require us to survey your property to ensure your foundation is structurally intact via blasting, a normal blast survey would be done. We have done a fair amount of test pits, we don't anticipate blasting.

Discussion:

R. Snetsky: First, have we received a set of comments from Fire Dept?

M. Hamor: We have an email that was forwarded to Jared last week. That correspondence was initially between Christine, myself, and the Fire Chief.

Staff: That can be forwarded to the Board.

R. Snetsky: I am looking at the memo from Jared. Under the building dept, it talks about fire safety questions. It says, "the road which appears to serve as fire access is only 14 ft. which is fewer than the 20 f required."

M. Hamor: That was an initial comment from fire dept. That CMR comment came up because we know that's a requirement for an access drive that's greater than 150 feet. The Fire chief and I corresponded that if the buildings are sprinklered, you don't have to hold strict conformance to the 20 ft. The fire chief said if you sprinkler the building, then we don't need to strictly adhere to the 20 ft.

R. Snetsky: Hopefully we can see that from the Fire Chief. The length and width of the driveway are kind of a concern.

M. Hamor: It's almost like two sets of drives. What we did was create 2 sections. One goes up to the four spaces and has room to pull off if needed. With 14 ft. you can get two cars by each other maybe not two trucks. The requirement for a 2 way width is 12 ft. in the zoning chart. If this was going to be an issue, we have a contingency plan of using the access in the rear. A lot of properties have plenty of parking on their own properties.

J Gys: I do have some questions. Reads comments from Wastewater and Water dept. in the project comment memo. Have those been addressed?

M. Hamor: Yes, they are in a revised set of plans that will be submitted Friday or Monday. I have gone over comments with the sewer det. I don't anticipate those will be an issue. We are going to have hydrants at the end of the street with a 6" line. We are going to talk to Water Dept. and how they want to deal with the water valves and the gates off of that line. That will be able to be flushed out through the hydrant.

J. Gys: Are you going to be moving forward with a vote?

M. Hamor: No, we want to meet with the neighbor. We will give plans to the sewer dept. and get confirmation from the fire dept.

J. Gys: You've come a long way from the pre-application meeting.

J. Frechette: I don't think we have made a lot of progress from the last meeting. It basically sits on the site the way it was presented the last time at the pre-application meeting. One of the concerns I had was the cohesiveness of the development and the estate looking at the primary home on Highland Street. This is more of a condo development and you would think of it being a cohesive estate with the proposed duplexes. Even in the criteria of the application, under neighborhood character, it states how does this protect the character of the existing neighborhood? Successful projects should reflect the density and urban design - the setbacks height and landscape elements. What you have come up with in of itself is not unattractive, but I don't see how this relates to the main structure on the site. Once again, I'm looking at the house that is part of this condo development. I'm looking at the abutting properties. And I will not say, the apartment buildings, identify the character of the neighborhood. Those apartments are an aberration that's there unfortunately. It doesn't fit to be honest. We are in a unique situation. This is subject to historic board approval. During the pre-application meeting, it was unclear if it was just design review or Historic Board approval. I was hoping it was just design review over historic board approval because that would take place before our public hearing and we would know exactly what the comments were and the desire of the planning dept. as well as Mr. Stowell. I do know they also engage the architects with the National Park. At the end of the day, they have jurisdiction of the final look of the site. It puts us in a precarious position. The criterion for Special Permit is neighborhood character. I would be looking for requiring a letter from staff expressing the desire that the Historic Board take into consideration of that estate. I envision a carriage house and a barn looking structure that complements the structure in the front. The abutting properties have what looks like a barn potentially. I don't think these are a bad design in of themselves. My correspondence is this project has had only minimal and preliminary discussions with Mr. Stowell. The govt. shutdown and NPS architects have been unavailable for input. That's what I have been told to date. I want to make sure we are on the same page.

M. Hamor: I don't think we are on the same page in regards to that. The first thing I told Mr. Gorman to do was sit down with Steve Stowell and I to go over what Steve would envision in the rear. We know the goal is to preserve the existing house so that when you're walking down Highland St. it looks just like how it was. Then we started getting into the rear

of the property and discussed different configurations and different styles of development. If I'm not mistaken, we've met with Mr. Stowell three times. We looked at adding barn doors, and have added small gables above the front entrance way. We've added overhangs and gables and windows to the side. We have an overhang coming off the front of the garage. We have a lot of architectural details that make it a better development than the original development. After we got done with the pre-application meeting we saw Steve Stowell and asked if we should completely redesign or go off with what we have and that's what we've decided to do. We have these goose lamps which are a barn style architectural element. We've been doing this with Steve Stowell and have really needed him as the design review. At the end of the day, we have to go before the Historic Board and they have to approve this project. We did the same thing with the McDonough's property. There have been a lot of improvements to the design of this building to make it serve the purpose of what the historic board is going to be looking for. When you move to the rear of the property, the scale of the neighborhood changes. Yes, this is not a street scape building that's closer to the home or stately, but its pushed back, and this style is indicative of the some of the buildings in the rear of the property.

J. Frechette: I want to make sure my concerns are passed on. I feel there needs to be a cohesiveness. It's a one condo development so they have to take that into consideration.

Rowena Hirmer, 48 Highland St: We have this concern too. They are not ugly but they are not in character with the adjacent properties or the front building. Anywhere else, they would be attractive but what people are going to see when they drive by is not the front of these homes. The owners are going to see the fronts, what we are going to be seeing is this, (shows side/rear elevation of renderings) which has no character. From the whole back of our house, we are going to be looking at this. It looks like a group home. I don't know what can be done about this. This is going to directly affect the values of our property.

J. Frechette: I encourage you to voice your opinion on this with the Historic Board that will be a public hearing. I just think one can argue it's an infill project and I think we have to be sensitive about it. I don't know about trying to develop an estate with a historic home and how these buildings complement the character of this neighborhood. I don't think it does.

M. Hamor: Completely understood Mr. Frechette. We didn't want to make it too tall, and make it more stately.

J. Frechette: But something that looked like a carriage house that went with the property. I'm not the expert. I wish I had a vote, but I don't. I have concerns procedurally how we deal with these projects that come before us with a special permit and go before the historic board as well. When you're talking about infill, and increasing density, design is what makes it work. Communities with dense older homes, the reason it works is because of design and landscaping. If you look at Newburyport, they have small lots but the way they are landscaped and the architecture, its cohesiveness looks really good.

M. Hamor: I have done some work in Newburyport. A lot of those buildings are right on the main roads, they look beautiful from the street and they keep the historic style. We are going to full restore the existing building that way that it is meant to be. We can take those comments and incorporate them into the design review. Mr. Lockhart who is going to be at those meetings can resonate some of that. I am going to talk to Steve again.

J. Frechette: I would be looking for something to come from this board understanding it is nonbinding. I am frustrated when this happens when it falls with Historic board review. We don't control design with Site plan review, but this has Special Permit. Again, these are not bad looking buildings.

M. Hamor: I'm not sure if this is a complete redo here. But we have been working with Steve Stowell to meet the needs that we felt he would need and we have been trying to interpret some of the stuff you mentioned. Last time, we went right over the Mr. Stowell and said what do we need to do to tweak these designs and he added some comments. Joel Silverwatch has done a number of designs in Lowell and worked with those comments and came up with this design.

F. Gorman: I have heard clearly your issue with trying to make the front look like the back. It's a difficult thing to do when you take a home that is that massive and beautiful and adapt it to something with the current building code regs. I

understand Ms. Hirmer's concerns with the look of the rear and the side and I am glad you have brought it up. I have looked at it a few times and thought maybe the back should look more like the front. I want to take some of those points that Mr. Stowell had us do and incorporate them to the entire house around. I will have my architect do that. He gave us a half dozen of places around the city and we took pictures. We brought them back to him in a meeting and asked what would you like for us to put on this building. I don't have to hear back from him again, we will take a lot of the parts and add them to the back. I have done this before and have done historic work in Dracut. We will have something for you and address the fence issue. I don't want to cut those trees down, not only because of the cost to remove them, but they are beautiful trees. We plants 100s of trees a year because we have to. If you don't have to cut down trees, then don't do it. We will work that out at a neighborhood meeting hopefully.

Motion:

Chairman Linnehan motioned and Member Frechette seconded the motion to continue this petition to the February 4, 2019 meeting. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

IV. **Notices**

V. **Further Comments from Planning Board Members**

VI. **Adjournment**

Member Snetsky motioned and Member Malavich seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting. The time was 9:00 p.m.