



City of Lowell - Planning Board

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 21, 2022 6:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers, 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
Russell Pandres, Associate Member

Members Absent

Sinead Gallivan, Associate Member

Others Present

Serena Gonzalez, Assistant Planner
Peter Cutrumbes, Assistant Planner (zoom)

A quorum of the Board was present. Chairman Linnehan called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

I. Minutes for Approval

April 4, 2022 Minutes

R Lockhart motioned to approve the minutes seconded by G Frechette. Approved unanimously 5-0

II. Continued Business

III. New Business

Special Permit: 22 Bellevue Street 01851

Madgi Mikhael has applied to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals seeking Special Permit and Variance approval at 22 Bellevue Street. The applicant seeks to convert the existing two-family residential building into a three-family residential building. The subject property is located in the Traditional Multi-Family (TMF) zoning district. The proposal requires Special Permit approval from the Planning Board pursuant Article 12.1(c) to expand a residential structure to three units, Variance approval pursuant Section 6.1 for relief from the off-street parking requirement and off-street parking dimensions, Section 5.1 for relief from the minimum lot area per dwelling unit and minimum usable open space per dwelling unit requirements, and any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

On behalf:

Madgi Mikhael - Applicant

In favor:

None

Against:

None

Discussion:

M Mikhael requested a continuance to the May 16 meeting

Motion:

G Frechette motioned to continue to the May 16 meeting, seconded by R Lockhart. Approved unanimously 5-0

Site Plan Review and Special Permit: Saint Louis School 72-74 Boisvert Street and 253 W Sixth Street 01850

ZR Development Group LLC has applied to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals to redevelop the existing St. Louis School building into nineteen (19) residences with twenty four (24) off-street parking spaces. The application requires Site Plan Review under Section 11.4 to construct more than three dwelling units and Special Permit approval for the conversion of an existing historic school under Section 8.1. The application also requires Variance approval under Section 6.1 for relief from the off-street parking requirement, Section 5.1 for relief from the land area per dwelling unit requirement and usable open space requirement, and under Section 8.1.3(4) for relief from the minimum square footage requirement and for any other relief required under the Lowell Zoning Ordinance.

On behalf:

On behalf:

John Geary from Geary & Geary representing ZR Development Group LLC

James Zorbas, ZR Development Group LLC

In favor:

John Veck 10 Kearny Sq

J. Veck said that the City needs more housing, the building should be redeveloped. Young professionals are going to be working from home and do not need parking spaces.

In opposition:

Corey Robinson 5 W 10th St

C. Robinson expressed concern about the number of cars because there is no parking, will impede street sweeping and snow removal. Concerned about sewage overflow.

Sandy McNamara

S. McNamara said that she is worried about the number of cars, nowhere to park. Concerned about how expensive the units are. Centerville is densely populated. They should lower the number of units and have onsite parking. Says it will lower the quality of life for neighborhood residents

Ellen Wright 92 Bovierst St

E. Wright said that she is worried about the safety of the children. Children will get hurt because of the lack of parking. Concerned about the snow, people at each other's throats over parking, neighborhood violence.

Gina

Gina said that parking is a problem. Worried about people using the exit instead of the entrance. Fewer units will alleviate the parking problem.

Bill Flanagan 67 Varnum St

B. Flanagan said that the proponents of the plan have misjudged the site. In the early morning and evening, the streets are terrible. No room for onsite parking, dumpsters, or snow removal/storage.

Discussion:

T Linnehan asked how the entrance and exit will be monitored. J Geary doesn't think it'll be a problem because there aren't that many people coming and going.

T Linnehan asked about a fence. J Geary said they can install a fence if the board wants them to.

R Lockhart asked about the transportation management plan. J Geary said bikes, bus, LRTA. Will be mindful of who they lease to, looking for young professionals.

G Frechette asked if they have considered angled parking. J Zorbas said they did but it didn't change anything. Doesn't want to lose parking spaces. "G. Frechette suggested they utilize angled parking to direct the flow of cars entering and exiting the parking lot".

G Frechette said that everyone does their due diligence and visits the sites. Suggested an off-street parking analysis. G Frechette also asked about landscaping. G Frechette said that the units are small and cannot accommodate families so the parking is representative of that. G Frechette said that the longer the school stays vacant the more crime will come because of the broken window syndrome.

C Cheng says that with proper transportation management measures parking will not be a major problem. Says that the bike rack needs to be visible and accessible. Agrees that an off-street parking analysis should be done. Dense landscaping to prevent cars from passing will be better than a fence.

R Pandres asks where the bike rack will be. J Zorbas confirmed. Echoed the concerns of the Board. Asked about off-street parking. J Zorbas said they would assign spots.

R Malavich agrees that there should be a parking analysis. Said there will probably be less than two cars per unit.

J Geary says there will be a small increase in on-street parking. Says they are decreasing the runoff so there is no concerns for stormwater.

J Frechette motioned to continue to June 6 seconded by R Lockhart. Passed unanimously 5-0

IV. Other Business

Master Plan Steering Committee

DPD is looking to form a Master Plan Steering Committee that will help oversee the process and ensure public participation as a key element of the Master Plan. The Committee will consist of approximately 20-30 community members representative of Lowell's diverse population. A portion of the seats on the Steering Committee will be used as appointed positions that will include one representative from each of the various boards and committees. The Board will vote to appoint a member to the Master Plan Steering Committee from the Planning Board.

T Linnehan motioned to nominate G Frechette for the Master Plan Steering Committee seconded by R Lockhart.

G Frechette accepted and says he looks forward to being a part of the process

V. Notices

VI. Further Comments from Planning Board Members

R Pandres said that this will be his last meeting.

VII. Adjournment

G Frechette motioned to adjourn seconded by C Cheng. Approved unanimously 5-0

