

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES  
MEETING OF MARCH 28, 2006

A regular meeting of the Lexington Planning Board held in the Selectmen's Meeting Room, Town Office Building, was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Chairman Manz with members Galaitsis, Hornig, Canale, Zurlo and planning staff McCall-Taylor, Schilt and Tap present.

\*\*\*\*\* ADMINISTRATION OF LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS \*\*\*\*\*  
SUBDIVISION OF LAND

177 Grove Street Definitive Conventional Plan, Request for Extension: Staff informed the Board that the applicant, Rayvon Realty Trust, has requested an extension of 90 days, to August 14, 2006, for action on the conventional subdivision plan for 177 Grove Street, dated August 17, 2005. Mr. Hornig expressed his reservations about granting an extension as the applicant also has a cluster plan for 177 Grove Street in the permitting process, an unusual circumstance. It was pointed out that the applicant asked for more time to allow them to devise a cluster plan more acceptable to the abutters, with whom the developer is working. Should the cluster plan be approved the applicant would not need to proceed with the conventional subdivision application.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to grant the ninety-day extension to the time to act on the 177 Grove Street conventional subdivision plan, to August 14, 2006

Mr. Canale remarked on Ms. Manz' article about the Lexington Center Charrette that the Belmont Citizens Forum published in its March issue.

\*\*\*\*\* ARTICLES FOR 2006 TOWN MEETING \*\*\*\*\*  
PUBLIC HEARING

Article 7, CD-7 to CD-13, Planned Commercial District, 727 Marrett Road, Starwood Hotels and Resorts: Ms. Manz opened the public hearing on the petition of Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Inc. to rezone the site of the Sheraton Hotel on Marrett Road. This second hearing was made necessary by Community Classifieds Newspaper's failure to publish the second legal notice for the hearing scheduled for March 1, which was held.

Present for Starwood were Attorney John Farrington; Starwood Director of Real Estate Marketing Scott Thrun; architects John Fotiatis and Peter Brassard; civil engineer Robert Weidknecht; William Bunce, General Manager of the Sheraton; and traffic consultant Charles Kalasuskas. Mr. Farrington characterized the application and outlined the proposal. The architect and engineer presented slides showing the buildings and site layout and how they respond to the comments and requests from town boards and committees.

**Board Comments and Questions**

Mr. Canale outlined what he saw as shortcomings of the Preliminary Site Development and Use Plan (PSDUP) and pointed out the missing information. Some items referred to in the PSDUP narrative do not appear elsewhere in the submittal. Mr. Farrington said he would correct that.

Mr. Canale and Mr. Zurlo explored the visual impact of stair towers and asked for elevations showing the towers, as well as asking that the towers be minimized as much as possible. Mr. Weidknecht and Mr. Fotiatis said that they would be under 11 feet in height and agreed to that as a maximum. The stair tower will be much less than the allowed 20 feet. Mr. Fotiatis agreed to more clearly label the mechanicals and elevator towers on the elevation drawings.

It was pointed out that the landscape buffer facing the RO district does not quite meet the Zoning By-Law provisions. Mr. Weidknecht responded that the plans are not yet keyed specifically to the Zoning By-Law.

Mr. Kalauskas reported on a meeting earlier in the day on the subject of traffic and the level of service (LOS) at the intersection of Marrett Road and Massachusetts Avenue. The applicant's original intention was to close the end of the driveway through the site from Marrett Road to Massachusetts Avenue, as 75 percent of its traffic is cut-through to avoid the signaled intersection. But closing it would affect the LOS there adversely, lowering it to F, lower than the agreed upon Level E. So the driveway will remain open. Mr. Bunce added that the driveway will be graded and a stop sign installed at its intersection with Massachusetts Avenue.

Mr. Canale cited provisions of the Zoning By-Law which the proponents of the rezoning have not yet addressed in the PSDUP: the reason for the request, how it would comply with the Planning Board's Comprehensive Plan and a financial impact statement. Mr. Farrington indicated that they are in the handouts. Mr. Galaisis added that the Board needs to know the baseline building details in order to recognize any significant deviations from the plan at the special permit stage.

Mr. Zurlo noted that the Design Advisory Committee does not approve of the amount of disturbance to the knoll called for in the PSDUP and only marginally accepts the designs of the buildings.

#### **Audience Comments and Questions**

Mr. Frank Sandy, TMM precinct 6, expressed his concern about the height of mechanical elements on the roofs of the hotels, stating that they have not been shown on the plans. The architects indicated that the mechanicals and the like comply with the State Building Code, which allows them to reach as high as 20 feet above the roofline. They have appeared on the plans but the labels will be made more evident.

Mr. John Davies, Sidewalk Committee asked if a direct footpath at the south edge of the site to the bus stop on Marrett Road would be provided. Mr. Weidknecht said that could be done and they may do that and eliminate the other sidewalk. Mr. Davies said that one did not substitute for the other.

Ms. Dawn McKenna, Tourism Committee expressed the support of the Tourism Committee for the rezoning, although they will continue their efforts to get facades that fit with the park.

Mr. Lou Sideris, of the National Park, asked if the link would be written into the special permit. The answer was affirmative. In response to his question as to the color of the rooftop elements, the architect said that it would be charcoal.

Ms. Mary Jo Bohart, Chamber of Commerce, conveyed the Chamber's Board of Director's unanimous support for the proposal. They feel the town needs these hotel rooms to stay competitive in both business and tourism.

Mr. Farrington listed the traffic mitigation plan that he said had been discussed with the Traffic Mitigation Group (TMG) that afternoon. In brief the elements were as follows: 1) continue the employee car pools; 2) continue and expand the employee transport system; 3) provide bike racks and showers; 4) continue the current van service with a possible second van being added; 5) \$20,000.00 a year contribution to LEXPRESS with a review at three years; 6) computerization and co-ordination of the intersection signals, working with the Mass Highway Department; 7) \$5,000.00 to TMG to further study a Transportation Management Association (TMA); 8) identify a linkage trail to the national park, a way to get down Massachusetts Avenue and funding to the park to connect to the existing trails; and 9) creation of 11-foot travel lanes and striping the shoulders to create bike and pedestrian travel ways on

Massachusetts Avenue between Marrett Road and Wood Street as well as a pedestrian cross walk at the new path entrance to the National Park.

There was considerable discussion about the TDM measures and how issues could be resolved in time to go forward with the scheduled Town Meeting vote of April 5. Mr. Farrington suggested he could ask for a later date at Town Meeting but was advised that there would be serious scheduling issues.

The issue of payments to Lexpress and whether or not they should be made in perpetuity and with an escalator clause was discussed. R. Farrington indicated that the team could meet with TMG the next day (Wednesday) to finalize the transportation mitigation package. Mr. Hornig indicated that he wants the agreement to result in concrete improvements to pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as to traffic circulation in the area.

The hearing was closed at 10:00 p.m.

As the Town Meeting members have said they want the Planning Board report by Monday, April 3, on a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to publish and distribute the report on Article 7 without a recommendation. After the mitigation package is decided upon, the Board will vote again and publish a supplementary report including its recommendation.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted 3-2 (Mr. Canale and Mr. Galaitsis opposed) to support Article 7 at Town Meeting, conditioned on receiving additional favorable material from the applicant.

Article 5, Impervious Surface, Recommendation to Town Meeting: Mr. Hornig offered an amended motion to set the permitted maximum ISR numbers in cluster subdivisions at .18 in an RS district and .25 in an RO district, in the hope that Mr. Galaitsis and Mr. Zurlo could support them as a compromise, and not present a minority report recommending disapproval of the amendment.

Mr. Galaitsis maintained his position that the Town Meeting in 1996 gave the Planning Board specific direction when it approved the revised cluster provisions and since then the Planning has gone beyond its direction by not including the area of the roadway in calculating impacts of a subdivision. Mr. Galaitsis indicated that the matter could wait until the Board does a comprehensive revision of the cluster provisions. He would not support an ISR over .17 in an RS district and .22 in an RO district or the provision to waive these maximum ISR limits.

On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted 4-1 (Mr. Galaitsis opposed) to approve the amendment offered by Mr. Hornig, changing the ISR figures in the proposed Article 5, impervious surface motion to .17 and .25.

Mr. Hornig said he would inform the moderator and the town meeting members of the change in the motion. Although the Board had no problem with the question being divided, it was decided to leave the question of dividing the amendment to Town Meeting. On a motion duly made and seconded, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 p.m.

Anthony G. Galaitsis, Clerk