

Arlington Redevelopment Board
February 23, 2015 Minutes
Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room, Town Hall – 7:00pm

Approved: March 2, 2015

PRESENT: Chair, Andrew Bunnell, Mike Cayer, Bruce Fitzsimmons, Andy West

ABSENT:

STAFF: Carol Kowalski

Documents Used:

Application for 248 Mass Ave, date stamped January 30, 2015

Additional application pages for 248 Mass Ave, date stamped February 16, 2015

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. Mr. Bunnell asked the special permit applicant if the Board could discuss one agenda item prior to their hearing. The applicant confirmed this was alright.

Deputy Town Manager Andrew Flanagan discussed how capital improvement projects at the 3 buildings in the Urban Renewal Fund, which is under the authority of the Redevelopment Board, have been funded over the past 30 years. Mr. Flanagan stated that there needs to be a shift in how these items are financed moving forward. Mr. Flanagan said that most of the work that has been done over the last 30 years has been small in magnitude, such as bathroom improvements or exterior improvements. The three projects that will be included in the report at Town Meeting in April will include the second phase of funding to pave or re-brick the driveway around the Central School, the replacement of the front porches at 23 Maple Street, and the roof of the Jefferson Cutter House. Unlike previous projects these cannot be paid for in cash. Mr. Flanagan said he recommended to the Town Manager and the Capital Planning Committee that for general fund borrowing we borrow funds for these projects and then pay the debt service associated with these projects from the fund.

Ms. Kowalski added that there is a strong cash flow coming from 23 Maple Street and a weak cash flow from the Jefferson Cutter House; the cash flow from Central School and 23 Maple Street would have to be used to supplement the Jefferson Cutter House. Ms. Kowalski said that all these projects are very important to the buildings, and overdue. Furthermore, since these buildings are in a historic district it is important to maintain these buildings the way in which the Town would require a private residence to maintain their home in a historic district.

Mr. Flanagan added that the three projects total about \$400,000 collectively. The first phase of paving at the Central School was funded last year; the second phase of the paving, the roof repairs, and the porches will all be in fiscal year 2016.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked for details on the interest. Mr. Flanagan said that in year one there would be about \$20,000 in interest.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked how long it usually takes to repay the general fund. Mr. Flanagan said it would probably be between 7-12 years.

Mr. Cayer asked for confirmation that the Urban Renewal Fund is able to function in this way in order to accommodate the projects. Ms. Kowalski said she did not think there were any HUD rules that would prevent this, but she would confirm.

The Board moved on to the agenda item of the Environmental Design Review Special Permit for 248 Massachusetts Avenue for Alouette Realty LLC.

Mark Noonan, Peter Noonan and their architect Joseph Artley introduced themselves to the Board.

Mark Noonan provided an overview of the proposed project. The property at 248 Mass. Ave. is zoned as R6, and the building is adjacent to two other properties that are R6. The building is currently a small ranch, which they hope to replace with a three-story structure to match the surrounding streetscape. It would be three stacked units, with the ground floor unit slightly smaller than the top two units due to indoor parking on the ground floor. It was noted that some substitute pages had been added to their application that had lighting details added to the plans and had one error corrected, but nothing else has been changed from the originally submitted plans. Mr. Artley summarized the details of the setbacks, and stated that the plan meets all zoning requirements. He stated that the only item they are asking for relief on is the parking requirements. There are three units and five parking spaces, instead of having two spaces per unit. The one parking space inside will go to the ground floor unit, and the other two units will use the four outdoor parking spaces.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked how the architect envisions the drivers being able to turn around in this parking area.

Mr. Artley said that the 24 foot setback that is required is delineated on the plans. The drivers would make a three point turn when backing out.

Mr. Noonan pointed out that the location offers many options for the residents to walk to commerce in Arlington, and use public transportation.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked if the parking spaces will be assigned to the units. Mr. Noonan said the intention is to make these units condominiums with assigned parking spaces.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked what materials the building would be constructed of. Mr. Artley said it would be wood framed with engineered wood. Mr. Artley summarized the construction for the exterior of the proposed building and the intended color scheme of the building.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked for details of the color scheme. Mr. Artley said he was leaning towards different shades of gray and stated that he wants the building to have a contemporary look that would not appear dated years from now. Mr. Fitzsimmons said that the uniformity would be broken up with the shades of gray. Mr. Artley confirmed that was the intention.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said that the height of the penthouse portion of the proposed building goes above the height of the surrounding buildings. He asked if there was any thought to putting something on the front of the building at the penthouse level that would partially screen the mechanics that are going to be on the top.

Mr. Artley stated that he wanted to have a broad overhang, and he didn't want to put a parapet up on the top of the building. He added that the penthouse and the mechanical items will be set back far enough from the front façade of the building that the penthouse will not be visible from the street (at least not from the side of the street closest to the building) and the mechanical items will not be visible no matter where you are.

Mr. Cayer said he liked the look of clean lines and mentioned his only concern would be if a person would be able to see any vinyl fencing at the top of the building since it would take away from the overall look. Mr. Cayer added that if a roof deck was up there he didn't think it would be visible from the streetscape either.

Mr. Fitzsimmons commented that the drainage and storm water management report hasn't come in yet. Mr. Noonan confirmed that this piece of the plan will be addressed appropriately, and it is being worked on with the Town Engineer at this time.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked about the landscaping plan. Mr. Artley asked if the Board needs exact details

of each plant they intend to put in. Mr. Fitzsimmons said it is part of the required documents even though the scale of the work would probably not require a landscape architect.

Mr. Noonan said on page Z04, there is a reference to landscaping. Mr. Artley added there is one mature tree in particular that they hope to relocate.

Mr. West asked if they will be able to get trees in the front area of the plan. Mr. Artley said it would not be likely due to the walkway interference. Mr. West said it would be nice to have something in front for scale.

Mr. Cayer inquired about the walkway addition and stated it looked like a dead-end. Mr. Artley clarified the main entrance versus the side entrances for the Board, and said that the front walk way connected the driveway to the walk leading to the front entrance of the building.

Mr. West asked if bushes could add scale to the front. Mr. Artley stated he was concerned with the lack of sunlight in that location of the building and how the trees or bushes would grow over the years.

Mr. Kowalski stated that after a few years the branches would be above any height that might be disruptive for people walking by.

Mr. West said he could find out what plants he thinks would be best to add scale and get back to Mr. Artley. Mr. Artley said that he is open to rethinking the arrangement of the walkways and planting options.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked for the LEED checklist to be added to the application. Mr. Fitzsimmons reviewed some technical items, such as how on A01 and A02 there are no doors shown on the plan for the bedrooms.

Mr. Artley provided a copy of the LEED checklist he thought he had provided already with the application. Mr. Artley also provided cut sheets for the Board.

Mr. West asked about the fence that separated the parking from the back yard. Mr. Artley said it was the same fence as the perimeter fence. It is a 6' tall cedar fence with a lattice top.

Mr. West asked if all occupants are allowed in the backyard, or if that area was only for the ground floor tenant. Mr. Noonan said it would probably be for everybody but that is still being determined.

Mr. West asked for more details on the materials and colors being used for the exterior of the building. Mr. Artley summarized the materials as shown on the plan. Mr. West said it would be best to see the sample paint colors selected so that the Board could review. Mr. West reiterated that landscaping details would be nice to see as well.

Mr. Fitzsimmons agreed that the non-ornamental aspects of the building are nice, and would be complimented by plantings. Mr. Noonan agreed that this change would be beneficial.

Mr. Fitzsimmons said the Board can either continue the hearing to actually wait and see the additional materials that have been requested, or the Board can grant the special permit subject to conditions with respect to matters that the Board still has to review. Mr. Noonan said he liked the conditions approach, unless the Board feels the conditions list would be too lengthy.

Mr. Fitzsimmons moved that the Arlington Redevelopment Board grant a special permit to Alouette Realty LLC for their plans dated January 30, 2015 and February 16, 2015 with respect to EDR docket # 3476 subject to the general conditions that appear with all special permits, and the following special conditions:

1. A drainage and water management plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Town Engineer

2. A revised landscaping plan shall be submitted to the Director of Planning for her review and approval consistent with the discussion tonight
3. The LEED checklist submitted for the project shall be reviewed by the Director of Planning for her review and approval consistent with tonight's discussion
4. The applicant will submit a color palate and sample of building material to the Director of Planning for her review and approval consistent with tonight's discussion

Mr. Cayer seconded. All voted in favor.

The Board moved to the agenda item of Master Plan Town Meeting preparation. Ms. Kowalski summarized the warrant article for the Master Plan. She stated there are different conventions for the type of presentation and the duration the presentation gets, based on whether a report is accepted, received or whether the action is a resolution. The intention here is that the consultant, co-chairs, and the Redevelopment Board have the opportunity to answer any questions. So many implementation steps have to go to Town Meeting, so this is a prelude to future action. For that reason it is formed as a resolution. Ms. Kowalski asked if the Board agrees that a resolution is the right action.

Mr. Cayer spoke on the matter of presentation and timing. Since it is a true warrant article, it doesn't matter if the Board chooses to accept, receive, or endorse right now. From that perspective, the resolution is the best vehicle for what the Board is trying to do.

Mr. Fitzsimmons asked if there can be debate with this resolution. Mr. Cayer confirmed and said there can also be changes to the vote, not to the plan. Mr. Fitzsimmons said this point is important when spelling out of the resolution.

Ms. Kowalski said that she thinks a good part of the seven minute presentation at Town Meeting should revolve around what the resolution should be. Mr. Cayer said that discussing the work that was done, who did it, and what process existed might be the best presentation to make during the seven minutes.

The Board discussed the most effective way to present the Master Plan at Town Meeting and made some additional edits to the wording of the resolution.

The information sessions prior to Town Meeting were discussed. Ms. Kowalski asked the Board members to consider attending some of the information sessions to speak with attendees.

The Board moved on to the agenda item of the meeting minutes from February 4, 2015. Mr. Cayer moved to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2015 meeting as amended. Mr. West seconded. All voted in favor.

The Board turned to the agenda item of Central School leases and the 23 Maple Street lease. Mr. Fitzsimmons asked if security deposits are ever asked for. Ms. Kowalski said in the past she doesn't think they have been requested, but there is no reason why the Board can't include that in the leases well.

Mr. Cayer asked about the square footage discrepancy for Suite 128 in the Central School. Ms. Kowalski stated that the building was re-measured and 263 square feet is the correct number for Suite 128.

Mr. Cayer asked about Mystic River Watershed Association's request for a 1.5 year lease. He asked why they requested such a short time period. Ms. Kowalski said that they have not paid rent before and she thinks it is their way of making sure they don't lock themselves into an agreement that they can't maintain. Their intention is to stay longer, but the experience of paying rent is new to them.

The Board discussed the details of lease extensions. Ms. Kowalski pointed out that although the

tenants have requested a variety of lease extensions ranging from 2-5 years, the Board should make all lease extension options the same number of years for all tenants.

Ms. Kowalski said she would speak to Mystic River Watershed about the fact that in 6 months they would have to decide if they were going to agree to a 2 year lease extension. The Board asked Ms. Kowalski to present a longer lease for Mystic River Watershed Association, such as 3 years with a 2 year extension.

Mr. Cayer moved to adjourn. Mr. Fitzsimmons seconded. All voted in favor.