



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## Redevelopment Board Minutes 01/05/2004

Arlington Redevelopment Board  
Minutes of January 5, 2004

Members Present:           Ed Tsoi  
                                  Nora Mann                         Roly Chaput  
                                  Lynne Lowenstein  
                                  Barry Faulkner

Also Present:           K. J. O'Brien, Secretary ex officio  
                                  Laura Weiner, Planner

Ed Tsoi called the meeting to order at 7:50. Nora Mann moved that the Board enter Executive Session in order to discuss the Symmes Hospital site redevelopment in a manner that may affect the value of the property offered for sale. The motion was seconded by Roly Chaput, and Kevin O'Brien called the role. All members voted yes and the Board entered Executive Session.

Roly Chaput then made the motion to end the Executive Session, Nora Mann seconded it and Kevin O'Brien called the role with each member of the Board voting yes.

At 8:30 Ed Tsoi announced the start of the public hearing for a special permit under environmental design review for a proposal to build 26 condominium units at 19R Park Ave. by Developer Ed Hovseppian. Atty. Richard Keshian began the presentation and mentioned that he had a different opinion than the Planning Director regarding the proposal's open space and setback requirements. He then introduced Sam Offi-Oddo from the BSC Group who presented his analysis of the traffic impact. Sam Offi-Oddo pointed out that the nearby six street intersection has problems but that the additional traffic generated by the proposed housing would not have a noticeable impact on the problem. He did indicate that creating a second access point on Lowell St. would help. Richard Keshian said that the architect for the job unfortunately was stuck in the airport in Chicago and was not present tonight.

In response to questions Richard Keshian pointed out that DEP has required that the top two feet of soil be removed from the site. He said that the requested reduced setback from the property line along the bikeway was 14 feet and was set at that point in order to accommodate the parking inside the building which required a 65 foot width. Trash collection and snow plowing will be done by private contractor. Each unit has its own air conditioning unit; no machinery was to be placed on the roof.

Ed Hovseppian pointed out that the exterior materials were wood shingles and clapboard; the colors were not yet chosen; the base of the building would be a masonry, brick or brick like material and the windows would have simulated divided lights.

In response to Ed Tsoi's question, Richard Keshian said that they were seeking a special permit for the apartment use, for reduced setback, and for the inclusion of compact car spaces. Roly Chaput expressed concern about the shadows that would be cast by the building; Richard Keshian pointed out that the shadows would exist for only a short time. In response to another question Richard Keshian indicated that there was not enough room to make the Lowell St. access two-way. Roly Chaput said that he thought it was a stretch to say that the building was in scale with its surroundings and asked how many affordable units were in the proposal. Richard Keshian indicated that there were four affordable units. Lynne Lowenstein asked about trash receptacle and was told that it was inside the building, in the garage. Ed Tsoi asked about the height of the building and was told that it was 38.5 feet where 40 feet is allowed. Ed Tsoi then asked for public comment.

Harry McCabe said he favored the project but would like to see an entrance on Lowell St. Bill Carey who owns an abutting property (116-118 Lowell St.) said he would like to see the lot cleaned up and pointed out a potential problem with a retaining wall built by the owner of the property which encroaches on his property. Paul Mackey, 16 Lowell St. Pl. asked how close building would be to his property and asked whether a large oak tree near his property would have to be cut. He was told that building was 20 feet from his line and the tree would not be cut. Martha Scott said traffic was her main concern and wondered if people would be parking on street because parking was inadequate. Gayle Namechuk indicated that parking was a problem in that the nearby

church and nursery need on-street parking. Joy Spadafore said that area was congested in morning and wondered why so many units were proposed. Richard Keshian said that developer couldn't afford to build fewer.

Susan Harden agreed that traffic impact is not great, but thought that impact upon the marketability of the project was great and would developer work to improve the intersection. Richard Keshian responded that he would. Ann Leroyer said that the model should include the Arlington Coal and Lumber buildings because the combination of them and the proposed building makes the bikeway seem like a tunnel. David Mansfield said he was concerned about how the building would look from his Lowell St. Pl. home. Carl Elder expressed doubt about the small number of trips generated by the project. J.J. Rouhanna asked about gas station use of proposed driveway. Ed Hovseppian pointed out that there was separation and a retaining wall between the two uses. Jeff Edgers asked how the Board would work with the intersection problem. Ed Tsoi indicated that the Board must make its decision based on criteria in Bylaw and that the Selectmen must decide on any work in the intersection. Ed Starr of the Arlington Traffic Advisory Committee pointed out that his committee is charged to make recommendations to the selectmen.

Barry Faulkner expressed concern about parking spaces and asked what determines the elevation of the garage and was told that the slope of the driveway determined its elevation. Barry Faulkner said that more thought was needed to somehow use the Lowell St. access, perhaps by moving the duplex.

Ed Tsoi commented that the proposal was better than the existing junkyard, but that the Board's task is to look at the project from this time forward. The design is incredibly unimaginative. We are missing plans that show mounding around building. The floor plan doesn't have to be symmetrical or the same on each floor. The plan is not good enough, the site is irregular and has different surroundings and the design does not respond to it. The only proposed entrance takes everyone by a gas station. The one elevator in the building is located on one corner making it inconvenient for half the building. Before coming back, you must provide all the required plans, please give your architect all our comments and tell him to get to work.

Ed Tsoi asked Kevin O'Brien to add comments from his report. Kevin O'Brien explained that the setback on the north side of the building did not meet the Bylaw's requirements and that there did not appear to be adequate usable open space.

Ed Tsoi asked if Fire Department had access to the north side of the building. Ed Hovseppian replied that the Fire Dept. requested a fire lane in that location and it was provided by pavers in which the grass can grow in spaces.

The hearing was continued until February 23, 2004 at 7:30 PM

The Board then discussed the format for the Symmes presentation on January 12 and 13. It was decided that each applicant would have fifteen minutes to set up, forty minute to present and twenty minutes to respond to questions from the Board.

The Board decided to schedule a meeting on January 21 and ask that SAC report to them at that time. The Board considered a request to have the Symmes neighborhood present its reactions to the Board. After considerable discussion in which it was asserted that the Board's job is to represent all of Arlington and that in doing so it also listens to the input of the neighborhood; that giving special attendance to the neighborhood compromised the Board's responsibility to the rest of the Town. It was decided to ask that the Symmes Advisory Committee hear the comments of the neighborhood and include them in its report to the Board.

The Board adjourned at 10:20.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kevin O'Brien

Executive Session, January 5, 2004

Members Present: Ed Tsoi  
Nora Mann  
Roly Chaput  
Lynne Lowenstein  
Barru Faulkner

Also: Kevin J. O'Brien  
Laura Wiener

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Ed Tsoi introduced Jeff Mullan, attorney with Foley Hoag and Joe Tulumieri, Director of the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority, both consultants to the Board. Jeff Mullan passed out a draft evaluation form that the Board could use for evaluating the proposals. The Board and consultants discussed the merits of a quantitative evaluation and decided that it did not account for the varying importance of the many criteria against which a proposal must be judged. Joe Tulumieri pointed out that the process to date has given the Board a large number of criteria which makes a numerical rating nearly impossible. It was pointed out that some of the criteria was conflicting. The Board determined to resolve the large number and conflicting nature of the criteria by discussion in open meeting. It was decided that the Board's evaluation of each proposal would be written as a committee.

Roly Chaput then made the motion to end the Executive Session, Nora Mann seconded it and Kevin O'Brien called the role with each member of the Board voting yes.