



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **Redevelopment Board Minutes 02-24-2003**

### **Arlington Redevelopment Board**

Minutes of February 24, 2003

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

In Addition: Alan McClennen, Jr., Secretary ex officio  
Kevin O'Brien, Asst. Director of Planning

8:00 p.m. – The Redevelopment Board convened in the second floor conference room of the Robbins Memorial Town Hall annex to meet with Michael Collins and Brett Donham from Donham and Sweeney to review possible development options for 980 Massachusetts Avenue. Michael Collins was present along with Brett Donham, his architect, Dick Keshian counsel, and Marshall McLean from Donham and Sweeney, and Steve McKenna from Bowes Real Estate.

Mr. Keshian introduced the status of the project which involves the relocation of an historic structure at Hodgdon Noyes dealership, the transfer of Boston Federal Savings and Loan from its current location at 980 Massachusetts Avenue to the Sunoco site and the construction of nine housing units by Michael Collins. Mr. Donham then made a brief presentation on the various options that are being explored. They have concluded that the house should be moved to the corner of Mt. Vernon Street and Massachusetts Avenue where the current bank building is located. They are evaluating a series of alternatives on how to develop the remainder of the site. The house can be converted to three dwelling units and they plan to provide six additional dwelling units on the site. The question is whether they would be provided in two three-unit structures in addition to the house or three two-unit structures.

The Board reviewed the options as presented and had numerous comments which the architect and developer will take back and evaluate. The hope is to file for the special permits by the end of February for a public hearing to be held on Monday, March 24, 2003.

8:45 p.m. – Paul Schlichtman from the Arlington School Committee met with the Board to review his concept on selling Gibbs, Parmenter, and Crosby Schools. He pointed out that at the current time, there is not enough money to complete the remaining three elementary schools, and the program is complicated because of the fact that the School Department agreed to make up for a shortfall with the Peirce bond issue, so \$75,000 a year out of School Department operating expenses are being passed directly to pay for the excess bond indebtedness. There was a general discussion about whether or not the number of schools currently planned for renovation was appropriate and adequate. Mr. Schlichtman felt that the Town was facing a significant increase in enrollment in the next few years so they definitely will need seven elementary schools.

The Board agreed that they would be willing to meet with the School Committee to discuss this matter further.

9:30 p.m. – The Board reviewed the results of the Symmes Hospital presentation of February 13, 2003. David Walkinshaw from the Symmes Advisory Committee was present. The Board discussed the approach which has been taken to-date, namely, that the Symmes Advisory Committee's testing has been on the assumption that the development would maximums from the Symmes Advisory Committee. Mr. Tsoi pointed out that in some ways they should not be maximums because the variety of uses that might take place on the site could have less impacts but encompass more square footage depending upon what was proposed.

Barry Faulkner indicated that he had a concern that the Town Meeting may severely restrict the amount of development on the site which may push it into a nonmarketable site.

Nora Mann thought that perhaps the ARB should begin to focus on performance standards to help understand what the impacts might be.

Mr. Tsoi felt that it would be important to see what the development community is really interested in; therefore it might be appropriate to reverse engineer the site by creating specific guidelines that would be used and allow the development community to respond with proposals to those guidelines. This process would allow the Town through the Redevelopment Board to see what the market is really talking about under the Town's performance standards and guidelines.

The Board also then discussed the concept of amending the Urban Renewal Plan at the May 5 Special Town Meeting having a preliminary competition under Development Guidelines, select a developer or several developers, come back to Town Meeting to rezone the site, and then receive final offers. The Board members felt that was a good idea.

10:30 p.m. – Adjournment. Moved by Nora Mann, seconded by Barry Faulkner, to adjourn; unanimous vote in favor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Alan McClennen, Jr.