

MELROSE PLANNING BOARD
Regular Meeting & Public Hearing
Monday, June 29, 2009
7:45 p.m.
Mayor's Conference Room

PRESENT: Mike Cassavoy, Richard Connolly, Ed Cassidy, Bob Mercado, Gerry Marcus, John Sadowski, Anne DeSouza-Ward, Tom Pawlina and Carla Francazio

Denise Gaffey, Planner, and Matt Hennigan, Assistant Planner, were present.

The meeting was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by Mr. Connolly.

MINUTES

a) Draft Regular Meeting & Public Hearing, April 27, 2009

Mr. Mercado MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of April 27, 2009. Mr. Cassidy SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

b) Draft Special Meeting, June 4, 2009

Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to accept the minutes of June 4, 2009. Ms. Francazio SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed.

SUBDIVISION – SLOPE PROTECTION SPECIAL PERMIT

SP 08-001, Boardman Avenue, Green Morningside Nominee Trust (continued public hearing)

The Applicants, Linda Bulman and Mark Hutchinson, were present along with their Representative, Louis Izzi and Engineer, Chris Sparages from Hayes Engineering. Mr. Connolly introduced Mr. Izzi who indicated to the Board that Mr. Sparages will be standing in for Rich Williams from Hayes Engineering who is on vacation. Mr. Izzi offered a brief introduction during which time he stated that a responsible development is called for at the proposed site and pointed out that there is no more responsible developer than the Applicant. Mr. Izzi indicated that the public hearing process has been an extreme expenditure of time and resources and expressed frustration that the Applicant has been treated like an outsider. Mr. Izzi highlighted the efforts that the Applicant has taken to seek input from the neighborhood and keep open lines of communication and expressed disappointment that the concessions made by the Applicant have not been well received. Mr. Izzi stated that the proposal has been significantly modified during the public hearing process. In respect to the "mansions" issue, Mr. Izzi indicated that the dwellings proposed are permitted as of right according to the zoning ordinance. Mr. Izzi stated that the Applicant is committed to restricting the size of the dwellings to no more than 4,000 square feet. Mr. Izzi indicated that the retaining walls shown in the photos submitted are representational of the Applicant's proposal. The Applicant is committed to the use of natural stone and avoiding any man-made interlocking systems. Mr. Izzi pointed out that natural screening is shown and the length and height of the rip rap slope has been reduced. Mr. Izzi stated that a notation was added to the plan to address the concerns of the neighbors regarding the screening along the Arlington Street property line and expressed that the Applicant is committed to the preservation of as many mature trees as possible. Mr. Izzi stated that the modifications to the proposal are sincere efforts by the Applicant to address the comments from the neighbors. In respect to the Slope Protection Special Permit, Mr. Izzi stated that efforts have been made to enhance the existing landscape and maintain the existing topographic features. Mr. Izzi stated that a small portion of the roadway is impacted by areas of slope that meet the criteria of the special permit. Mr. Izzi stated that all of the dwellings will have walk-out basements to blend with the topography of the land.

Mr. Izzi introduced Mr. Sparages to provide an engineering update. Mr. Sparages stated that Sheet 9 contains an error that shows fencing extending the full distance along the Arlington Road property line.

Mr. Sparages provided an updated version of Sheet 9 that shows the use of fencing and landscaping to create a “living fence.” Mr. Sparages indicated that the amount of impervious surface on the cul-de-sac has been reduced through the inclusion of a landscaped island. Mr. Sparages stated that the width of the roadway on the cul-de-sac will be slightly wider than the Boardman extension. In terms of infiltration, Mr. Sparages stated a leeching system has been added to collect runoff from Lots 12 & 13. Mr. Sparages added that the proposed swale will also allow some stormwater infiltration. Mr. Sparages stated that screening for the swale will include a “living fence” in addition to the proposed two foot buffer for tree preservation. Mr. Sparages indicated that tree wells may be utilized in some cases. Mr. Sparages added that trees will also be used to screen the detention basin proposed to be located behind the Crafts’ property. Mr. Sparages stated that the Conservation Commission has requested that this detention basin be increased in size to expand the settling area for the stormwater before it enters the wetlands downstream. Mr. Sparages indicated that the height of the swale has been reduced by two feet as a result of a change in the height of the basements of the proposed dwellings. Mr. Sparages explained that increasing the distance between the basement and the first floor by dropping the basement to a lower grade, allows for the height of the swale to be reduced. Mr. Sparages addressed a concern by the neighbors that there is a “dip” in the land along the Arlington Road property line and confirmed that the swale will be at a lower grade. Mr. Sparages addressed comments from the peer review. Mr. Sparages indicated that the proposed design meets the 80% removal for runoff from the site, but not for off site runoff. Mr. Sparages stated that the City of Melrose is working with the City of Saugus concerning improvements to the culvert downstream and expressed that to ask the Applicant to take responsibility of the culvert is not fair. Mr. Sparages addressed a comment regarding the velocity of two pipes in excess of 10 fps and indicated that they do not anticipate enough velocity that will in result in erosion of the pipes.

Mr. Connolly introduced the peer review consultant, Kathy Schaeffer from AECOM, to present her findings. Ms. Schaeffer stated that the Applicant’s proposal has been reviewed in accordance with MA DEP and City of Melrose guidelines. Ms. Schaeffer indicated that the Applicant has addressed the majority of her comments. Ms. Schaeffer stated that proposal does not increase the flow from the site into the wetlands and that any present off site issues will continue to exist, but not as a result of this project. Mr. Sparages added that the Applicant understands the existing drainage problems in the area and highlighted that the Applicant’s proposal provides improvement by cutting off the existing drainage lines and depositing the runoff to a different section of the wetlands as well as by adding a settling basin that is designed to accept upstream runoff. Ms. Marcus inquired how the larger detention basin would impact the Crafts’ property. Mr. Izzi explained that the new design would benefit the neighborhood by treating the runoff from the watershed off site. Mr. Izzi stated that the side yard setback was used as the basis for the detention basin location and added that the Conservation Commission wanted it to be even larger. Mr. Pawlina asked if the swale was sized to handle greater than a 10-year storm event. Mr. Sparages was unsure due to his lack of familiarity with the project and Ms. Schaeffer indicated that she believed that the swale was sized for the 25-year storm, which she feels is reasonable. Ms. Francazio discussed the height of the proposed dwellings as viewed from Arlington Road. Mr. Connolly suggested the Planning Board relocate the public hearing to the Aldermanic Chamber so that everyone could be more comfortable.

Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to reopen the public hearing. Mr. Mercado SECONDED the MOTION. All voted in favor. None opposed. Mr. Connolly opened the meeting to public comment.

Louis Crafts, 171 Boardman Avenue

Mr. Crafts expressed concern about water in his basement which he has never had a problem with. Mr. Sparages explained that the detention basin is designed for 100 year flood event.

Jan Crafts, 171 Boardman Avenue

Mrs. Crafts inquired regarding the size of the detention basin proposed to be situated behind her property and was informed that it would be 55 feet long by 38 feet wide and filled with 2 ½ feet of water after a storm. Mrs. Crafts expressed concern regarding the maintenance of the detention basin. Mr. Sparages explained that the maintenance during construction will be the responsibility of the developer. Ms. Gaffey added that the City would require that a homeowners association be formed to maintain all the drainage systems on private property. Ms. Crafts supported the preservation of as many trees as possible and expressed concern regarding the noise level during construction.

Paul Ormand, 25 Arlington Road

Mr. Ormand acknowledged the changes to the plans and asked for more time for review so that he could submit his comments in writing. Mr. Ormand shared that he feels that the proposed fencing is stark and that more landscape architecture detail is needed as the current proposal is not specific enough. Mr. Ormand stated that the specific trees that will be preserved need to be identified in writing and that a tree survey is necessary. Mr. Ormand requested that the style of the proposed dwellings be codified to provide reassurance to the neighborhood that the character and style of the surrounding area will be maintained. Mr. Ormand indicated that the plans do not show enough survey points to capture the elevations on the Arlington Road properties. Mr. Ormand stated that the rip rap slopes and rock cuts proposed do not exist in Melrose and encouraged the use of fieldstone retaining walls, which are more characteristic of the area. Mr. Ormand concluded by handing out a copy of the purposes of the Slope Protection ordinance and suggesting that these purposes should be the guiding principles for the application.

Charlotte Linehan, 38 Windsor Street

Ms. Linehan inquired whether the proposed subdivision could be accessed from Windsor Street and how the proposed dwellings will be viewed from Windsor Street. Ms. Linehan was informed that no access is planned to Windsor Street and that the utility company parcel separates Windsor Street from the proposed subdivision.

Kevin Hegarty, 11 Cranmore Lane

Mr. Hegarty expressed support for the detention basin in the rear of the property to be as large as possible. Mr. Hegarty confirmed that easements would be required for inspection of the drainage systems. Mr. Hegarty reiterated that he discouraged the installation of fencing around the detentions basins for child safety reasons.

Elin Agustsson 17 Arlington Road

Ms. Agustsson expressed concern regarding the blasting involved with the proposal.

James Renier, 11 Arlington Road

Mr. Renier submitted photographs of “tree islands” which he encouraged as a method to enhance the preservation of trees on the site. Mr. Renier supported the elimination of sidewalks on the proposed roadway.

Judy Agnes, 47 Windsor Street

Ms. Agnes expressed support for the neighborhood. Ms. Agnes shared that after development took place on Windsor Street flooding began to occur. Ms. Agnes hoped that the Planning Board will help the neighborhood so that the residents will avoid having water in their basements.

Paul Cornacchini, 40 Boardman Avenue

Mr. Cornacchini suggested that a reconfiguration of the lots would be a benefit.

Steve Ventola, 154 Boardman Avenue

Mr. Ventola inquired regarding whether there is a height limitation for the proposed dwellings and was informed that the maximum height is 35 feet.

Alderman Medeiros, 3 Bay State Road

Alderman Medeiros thanked the Board for their efforts. Alderman Medeiros identified flooding as a major issue for the area and encouraged the detention basin furthest south to be as large as possible to assist with mitigating the drainage issues in the neighborhood. Alderman Medeiros emphasized that the preservation of trees is important and indicated that more detail concerning the view from the Arlington Road property line would be helpful. Alderman Medeiros inquired whether there is any engineering reason for the use of rip rap slope.

Dan Griffin, 45 Arlington Road

Mr. Griffin expressed his support for the preservation of trees on the site.

Mr. Connolly asked the Board for their comments. Mr. Pawlina inquired regarding the possibility of over-excavation of detention basin RES P3 so to lower the groundwater level and replace with materials in an effort to facilitate more efficient percolation. Mr. Mercado reviewed the fencing requirements for the detention basin. Mr. Sparages indicated that fencing is required for basins with a minimum depth of four feet. Mr. Cassidy questioned Ms. Schaeffer regarding the use of alternative drainage structures/strategies in lieu of detention basin RES P3 and the swale and was informed that the proposed plan allows for the appropriate treatment and capacity. Mr. Cassavoy asked for details to be provided for detention basin RES P3 and the retaining walls associated with driveways. Mr. Cassavoy encouraged the Applicant to preserve as many trees as possible in excess of the two foot buffer proposed. Mr. Sparages explained that the two foot buffer allows the swale to function as designed and added to the extent that the swale can be accomplished the Applicant will salvage as many trees as possible. Mr. Cassavoy confirmed that easements for the drainage systems are included in the proposal. Mr. Sadowski pointed out the lack of a Preliminary Plan. Mr. Sadowski clarified the jurisdiction of the Board for the Subdivision application is the roadway and that the zoning ordinance regulates the size of the individual dwellings. Mr. Sadowski expressed that the Applicant needs to identify the trees to be preserved. Mr. Sadowski encouraged the use of retaining walls instead of rip rap slope to allow the swale to shift away from the Arlington Road property line in effort to create a larger buffer area. Mr. Sadowski reviewed the intent of the Slope Protection Ordinance. Mr. Cassidy expressed frustration with the process, but noted the progress with the plans and indicated that if the Applicant showed fieldstone walls and a better tree buffer along the Arlington Road property line then he would be satisfied. In addition, he encouraged the Applicant to identify "tree islands" on the revised plans in addition to better screening along the Arlington Road property line. Mr. Cassidy inquired regarding the status of the Saugus culvert work and was informed by Ms. Gaffey that the Saugus Public Works superintendent was on vacation this week.

Ms. DeSouza-Ward voiced support for the use of retaining walls rather rip rap slope. Ms. DeSouza-Ward requested that the Applicant provide a planting schedule and questioned the types of plantings that would be included at the cul-de-sac and along the rear of the Crafts' property. Ms. DeSouza-Ward indicated that the lack of a Preliminary Plan did not disappoint her as no opportunity for public comment is included in the process. Ms. Francazio expressed frustration with the Applicant's lack of creative design. Ms. Francazio voiced her support for a tree survey to be conducted as well as the addition of fieldstone retaining walls and new tree plantings of at least 3" in caliper. Mr. Pawlina questioned whether the Engineer had already collected the necessary information regarding the trees on the site and commented that the application has progressed greatly in terms of the level of detail provided. Mr. Connolly pointed out that the Applicant would be required to comply with the City's noise ordinance during construction. Mr. Connolly polled the members regarding their availability in July. Mr. Pawlina MADE a MOTION to

continue the public hearing to July 28, 2009. Ms. Francazio **SECONDED** the **MOTION**. All voted in favor. None opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 p.m.