



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD
JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
MAYOR

STAFF PRESENT

MADELEINE MASTERS, *PLANNING DIRECTOR*
CHRISTOPHER DI IORIO, *PLANNER/ZONING ADMINISTRATOR*

MEMBERS PRESENT

LINDA BOHAN
JOSEPH FAVALORO
JAMES KIRYLO
ELIZABETH MORONEY
MICHAEL CAPUANO, ESQ. (ALT.)

MINUTES

The Somerville Planning Board held a public meeting on **Thursday, March 20, 2008** at **6:00 pm** in the Aldermanic Chambers at Somerville City Hall, 93 Highland Avenue, Somerville, MA.

Review of Continued Cases:

56 & 61 Clyde Street (“MaxPak” site): The Applicant, KSS Realty Partners, and Owners, 56 Clyde Street Acquisition LLC & 61 Clyde Street Acquisition LLC, seek approval of a preliminary master plan (S.Z.O. §16.8.1) for a Planned Unit Development-B1 (PUD-B1) project to construct a residential development on five parcels of land (Map 33, Block A, Lots 24-28). The residential development is proposed to contain 199 units in five buildings and is subject to inclusionary housing requirements (S.Z.O. §13.2).

The applicant is requesting additional zoning relief for number of parking spaces (SZO §9.5.1.a), parking space dimensions (SZO §9.11.a), and side yard setbacks (SZO §16.5.1.g).

Residence B zoning district. Planned Unit Development-B1 (PUD-B1) Overlay district. Ward 5.

The Applicant’s request for continuance was granted.

Review of Cases for the Zoning Board of Appeals:

39 Endicott Avenue: (Applicant & Owner: Endicott Partners, LLC; Agent: Richard Di Girolamo) The Applicant seeks Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval from the Planning Board under SZO §7.3 in order to construct an eight unit apartment building (including one affordable unit) on a 12,504 s.f. parcel in a Residence B (RB) zone -Ward 7.

The Applicant’s request for continuance was granted.



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503b Medford St: (Applicant & Owner: Broadway Investments; Agent: Richard G. Di Girolamo, Esquire) Applicant seeks a Special Permit (SZO §9.4 & §9.13a) for modification of parking requirements in order to expand an existing restaurant (currently Churrasco) into an adjacent space that is currently an office use. NB zone. Ward 5.

The Applicant's request for continuance was granted.

42 Craigie St: (Applicant Felix Consilvio and Owner Craigie Street, LLC Agent Richard DiGirolamo, Esq.) seek Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval under SZO §7.2 to construct two principal structures on the same lot as an existing principal structure. The applicant seeks Special Permit with Site Plan Review approval under SZO §7.3 to develop eight (8) residential units containing 12.5% affordable in a Residence B district. Ward 3.

The Board asked the applicant questions about the proposal, then accepted public testimony. Comments included concerns about the atypical design, apparent density, and absence of porches and balconies; desire for covenant prohibiting access to and from Porter Street; concern about blocked views to the south of Harvard Square and Cambridge; loss of a large tree on the site; grading of site and construction of retaining wall; height; garages being located above ground; number of units; concerns about enforcement; whether units would be rentals; how property would be maintained; width of driveway; concern about future use of garages; and additional paving and drainage issues.

Alderman Desmond stated that many people were in favor of the proposal and that he felt the applicant was being punished for unrelated events that had occurred at 7 Porter Street, and that the proposal was better than what else could go in under the zoning. Alderman Connolly stated that concerns expressed were longtime concerns in the City, and recommended a neighborhood team to follow progress and report to ISD. Ald. Connolly also expressed concern about blocking views and recommended that condo documents be required to prohibit the site's being combined with neighboring vacant lot on Porter. Alderman Taylor expressed apprehension about the project, acknowledged many phone calls received from neighbors about the height, traffic, and drainage concerns surrounding the project, and said he had tried to correct some misunderstandings.

Co-Applicant Sean O'Donovan stated that the problem at 7 Carver Street would not be repeated at this site, because he would be around to oversee the work and answer questions. There would be no work on weekends or evenings. He noted that the project had been before the DRC, the height was allowed under the zoning, and that drainage would improve as a result of the project.



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Board members directed questions about the drainage, landscaping and trees to the project architect, Peter Quinn, who explained that preservation of the tree would be a priority during construction although there was not yet an arborist involved in the project. He described efforts to improve the drainage by 85% from the present condition. He explained that the 12 foot slope allowed underground parking on one side of the site but not the other, and that there was a conflict in the design between historic reference (cupola and roof pitch) requested by the DRC and the height reduction desired by abutters. He stated that the site plan and design was intended to maintain the hierarchy of the existing house in the front as the principal house. Applicant's attorney Richard DiGirolamo stated that they would agree to restrictions prohibiting access to Porter Street and purchase of the adjoining property.

Board members discussed merits of a neighborhood group, concerns about enforcement, density, whether the development met the standards of the zoning, maintenance of the property if units did not sell. Mr. DiGirolamo commented that the proposal met the density standards for the RB district, which would allow 10 units, which is more than the proposal, and that the site would actually be less dense than the surrounding area, in terms of dwellings per acre. He further commented that the area was still holding value, that there was no intent to market the units as rental, and that the property owners would be responsible for maintenance. Mr. Kirylo expressed reservations about officially sanctioning any neighborhood committee, suggesting a less formal communication between ISD and the Alderman. Alderman Connolly requested a deed restriction prohibiting use of the garages as living space. Ms. Bohan commented that despite the density calculations' meeting code, the proposal would result in more people on the site. Ms. Moroney suggested additional conditions regarding the tree, covenants, garage, official contact person, and including a finding about the neighborhood group, and Ms. Bohan suggested a condition limiting the number of bedrooms. Mr. Favaloro expressed reservations about the precedent of establishing a neighborhood group. Alderman Taylor noted that Alderman play a facilitation role similar to the neighborhood group, so it may not be necessary to establish it, although he appreciated the board's acknowledgement of the concerns.

After this discussion, Elizabeth Maroney made a motion to accept the staff recommendation for conditional approval, adding conditions regarding garages not becoming living spaces, the assignment of a designated contact during construction, limiting the number of bedrooms to two per unit and the preservation of the large tree in the northwest corner of the lot; motion was seconded by James Kirylo, and carried 5-0.

The meeting was then adjourned.