

Beacon City Planning Board

January 10, 2012

A Planning Board meeting was held on Tuesday, January 10, 2012 in the Municipal Center courtroom. The meeting commenced at 7:00 p.m. with Chairman Jay Sheers, Members Rick Muscat, Elizabeth Strianese, Naomi Sachs, Spring Attaway, John Gunn, and Randall Williams. James Korn and Hank Dutch were in attendance as non-voting and non-participating Alternate Members. Also in attendance were Building Inspector Tim Dexter, City Engineer Art Tully, City Planner David Stolman, and City Attorney Nick Ward-Willis.

Mr. Sheers called for corrections/additions or a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2011 meeting. Ms. Attaway made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Gunn. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

ITEM NO. 1 PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL, 64 RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND COMMERCIAL SPACE, ONE EAST MAIN STREET, SUBMITTED BY EAST MAIN MILLS, LLC

This item was removed from the agenda at request of the applicant.

ITEM NO. 2 PUBLIC HEARING ON APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT, TO ALLOW THE ADDITION OF ONE STUDIO APARTMENT TO THE REAR OF THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE BUILDING, 308 MAIN STREET, SUBMITTED BY MUSTANG LION PROPERTIES, LLC (MARKO GUZIJAN)

Aryeh Siegel described his client's proposal to create a ground floor rear apartment at 308 Main Street, and explained a bakery occupies the first floor retail space with two apartments on the upper levels. He explained the residential use is permitted with Special Use Permit approval and hoped for a positive recommendation to the City Council.

Mr. Stolman had concern that vehicles exiting the blacktop parking area would need to back out onto Main Street. These spaces were not labeled on the site plan prior to this submission therefore the City Attorney will be submitting a memorandum explaining the parking condition. Mr. Stolman asked that a copy of the easement located on the adjacent property be provided to show that it benefits 308 Main Street. Mr. Tully had no engineering comments.

Sabry Gherberial, realtor for Wiechert Realty, reported he sold 308 Main Street to the previous owner and believed the driveway/parking area was split between the two buildings. He understood the mutual access was an agreement made years ago when Fred Antalek owned 308 Main Street. As a realtor, Mr. Gherberial sees the need for additional apartments and supported the creation of the additional apartment.

Mo Guzijan explained the parking lot belongs to 308 Main and the small easement shown on the map is for a walkway, not parking. The blacktop space is currently used by the bakery for loading and unloading, with one space for the tenant. He explained a turn-around could be created if necessary but this situation has existed for many years. Mr. Guzijan explained nothing about a shared parking area is shown on the title, deed, or survey because the lot belongs to 308 Main Street property.

There were no further comments and Ms. Attaway made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Strianese. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion took place regarding the parking situation because one vehicle may be blocked when the other two spaces are occupied. No additional off-street parking is required for this application and the condition will be addressed in the City Attorney's memorandum.

Ms. Sachs was concerned that the trash enclosure prevents a tenant from accessing the apartment under protection of the covered walkway. Mr. Guzijan explained the bakery does not need a large container therefore the cans issued by the City are used, and he offered to relocate the enclosure.

Mr. Williams asked if the oven inside the bakery was properly ventilated considering apartments share the building. Mr. Dexter explained when the building was rehabilitated the proposed apartment was contemplated therefore all fire walls and appropriate separations were constructed at the time.

Ms. Attaway made a motion to send a positive recommendation to the City Council for the Special Use Permit, subject to review of the City Attorney's memorandum regarding the parking condition and the applicant return for final site plan approval, seconded by Mr. Williams. All voted in favor. Motion carried.

ITEM NO. 3 CONTINUE REVIEW OF APPLICATION FOR SITE PLAN APPROVAL, BEACON KINGDOM HALL, HOWLAND AVENUE (SECOND LOT OF FORMER SKI LODGE PROPERTY), SUBMITTED BY BEACON CONGREGATION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Scott Lucas, representing the Congregation, explained they were previously before the board and, as requested, are now returning with three site layout options for consideration. He described and commented on the following options:

Option #3 moves building to the rear of the parcel with parking in front near the street. The building would be 15-18 ft. above road level and require a great deal of drainage and stormwater mitigation. The water main easement must be avoided which leaves very little space for stormwater retention areas and rain gardens. Landscape screening can be done but space is limited and lighting may affect adjacent property owners. Additionally, the parking lot is in front of the building and they typically like to situate it to the rear of the site.

Option #2 situates the building closer to the street with parking to the rear of the site. A carport in the front provides a place for congregation member drop-off and pick-up. Stormwater measures would be more difficult because there is less space on the south side of the site. This layout would force participants to walk around the building to the front entrance, and pose a problem during inclement weather when vehicles are stacked at the front entrance. Lastly, this option creates more impervious surface and require additional mitigation.

Option #1 positions the building on somewhat of an angle, closer to the street with parking toward the rear and side of the site. Mr. Lucas provided an architectural rendering of the building which was revised to blend in with larger scale adjacent housing. The roofline of the proposed building is 20 ft. high whereas most houses in the area are 35-40 ft. The hip roof system appears to lower the building and the brick facade blends in better with the area. They felt parking located on the easterly side of the site would make it easier to shield light from adjacent properties. The door facing the street leads from the library and will only be used for emergency access. The covered drop-off/pick-up area is located to the rear of the building.

Mr. Stolman felt the presented building elevation and last site layout (Option #1) was an improvement from the initial presentation. Minor revisions and additional windows would make the back of the building appear as the front and further improve its appearance. He had concern for queuing because vehicles would need to cross over the natural flow of traffic to reach the drop-off/pick-up area.

Mr. Tully felt grading would be challenging and asked if any retaining walls were proposed. Mr. Lucas explained no retaining walls are planned but a steep embankment surrounds the parking lot. Mr. Tully also had concern about traffic crossing lanes to reach the covered entrance, and explained it is not typical for traffic to drive through a parking lot to reach the entrance. Mr. Lucas explained an additional lane is provided outside the carport area to accommodate traffic. Concerns remained that traffic would need to be choreographed.

Discussion took place about the addition of windows to balance the building elevation that faces Howland Avenue, possible addition of dormers to break up the long roof line, and additional landscaping. Grading, shielding, landscaping, and traffic flow details can be worked out once the general site layout is approved.

Mr. Sheers asked if the parking calculations were based solely on normal worship meetings. Mr. Lucas said the plan is based on normal worship, and 10 additional parking spaces are proposed than are required by zoning. Additional parking details will be worked out as the plan develops. There are no standard hours of operation; evening services typically end by 9:00 p.m., and security lights are turned off between 9:00-10:00 p.m.

Concerns for building size, general operation, and traffic in the area were discussed. Mr. Stolman explained interior traffic flow is a design problem that must be resolved by the applicant. The general consensus of members was to support the layout provided in Option #1 over the three options presented, with the understanding that a great deal of additional information will be needed to be certain the layout is viable.

There was no further business and Ms. Sachs made a motion to close the meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams. All voted in favor. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.