

**City of Newburyport  
Planning Board  
May 1, 2024**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

**1. Roll Call**

Planning Board Attendance: Bob Koup, Jamie Pennington and Rick Taintor

Planning Board – Remote: Brian Balcom, Beth DeLisle and Charlie Palmisano

Absent: Jen Bluestein, Alden Clark and Heather Rogers

Planning Director Andy Port and note taker Caitlyn Marshall were also present.

**2. General Business**

***a) Approval of Minutes***

- ***4/17/2024***

Minutes will be approved at the May 15, 2024 meeting.

***b) Discussion***

- ***MBTA Communities Rezoning Project***
- ***40R***

Rick Taintor presented the Planning Board consensus plan. He stated that the Zoning Advisory Committee met and added a couple more parcels on Parker Street, rather than using the Enpro site. Parker Street has more benefit because it qualifies for the 25% affordability requirement, which would not be available on the Enpro site. He suggested extending the Smart Growth District to Parker Street. The City Council will be referring the plan to the Planning and Development Committee next week.

Director Port stated he reached out to Councillor Shand and encouraged Councillors to come to the sub committee meeting. He stated he wanted input from all Councillors.

Charlie Palmisano asked if the plan including the Enpro requires them to tweak zoning.

Rick Taintor stated they would need to create a new zoning overlay district for that area. Adding Hines Way and Parker Street would let them expand the district with minor tweaking.

Charlie Palmisano asked of the plan ZAG suggested was easier to implement.

Rick Taintor stated there were two reasons. The plan is easier to implement. It also allows more potential for subsidized units.

Director Port stated he was in favor of streamlining for permitting.

Rick Taintor referred to the character of Parker Street. He suggested the board think about how new three story buildings should fit into this corridor. They would be looking at four parcels; the fifth parcel is not developable.

Director Port stated he agreed with Rick Taintor about improving street views.

Rick Taintor stated the current zoning has a ten foot maximum front yard set back. He stated the board does have the ability to waive things. Can we get what we want with that ten foot set back? He stated they want something that is different from what is there right now.

Charlie Palmisano asked if they want to see more urbanized development on Parker Street.

Rick Taintor stated yes. He does not want to have buildings separated from the street by parking lots.

Charlie Palmisano suggested increasing corridor of accessibility up towards the school.

Rick Taintor stated yes.

Director Port stated the existing 40R District does specify buildings be brought up to the street.

Charlie Palmisano asked what is the parking ratio for units at 1 Boston Way?

Director Port stated it is a few over what the ordinance requires, possibly 1.3.

Charlie Palmisano stated if there is an increase in density, they would need more room for parking.

Director Port stated the state puts that into their algorithm.

Rick Taintor stated that the existing projects on Boston Way and the approved project on Route One have parking under the buildings. There is more density than what the state is saying with parking under building. He also stated they should adjust the zoning for Parker Street so it does not allow development similar to the Minco projects, parcels ten feet from the street and deeper than they are wide. He

then showed images from 1 Boston Way with streetscape. This project was allowed to be placed more than ten feet from the street because of drainage issues. It is set further back and probably received a waiver. He stated he looked around on the Internet of examples of buildings that have their major face towards the street. They have a feeling of being more pedestrian oriented.

Charlie Palmisano asked what would the density equate to?

Director Port stated thirty units per acre.

Charlie Palmisano asked if they were also going to be including the possibility of having mixed use?

Rick Taintor stated Parker Street could have buildings be “L” shape with major frontage on street and tuck the parking behind. He provided examples. He then went over street design objectives and ideas .

Director Port stated there is potential impact on unit density. He suggested offsetting the ratio while still achieving these design standards.

Rick Taintor suggested buildings be moved twenty feet back from street. This still allows for a ten foot shared path.

Bob Koup asked if there is room for planting edge and street trees?

Rick Taintor stated that is what we want to talk about. He suggested a three or four foot-planting strip. They could expand.

Bob Koup suggested that Boston Way could be used as a point of access to these three new parcels and bring cars in on the backside and avoid curb cuts on Parker Street.

Director Port stated they could, but it wouldn't be permitted on some lots.

Rick Taintor stated that right now the lots have a minimum of 10,000 square feet and a minimum frontage of forty feet. There is no minimum required setback. He then referred to the Melrose Smart Growth District and how they have a maximum twenty-foot setback. He suggested they could do a thirty-foot setback with a sitting area. He also referred to Portsmouth regulations.

Director Port asked if this would be a new sub area or modify what is already there.

Rick Taintor stated that it would be a new subarea. How should we plan for Parker Street and what zoning changes do we need to make that happen?

Charlie Palmisano asked what is the reason for reducing the setback?

Rick Taintor suggested increasing the maximum setback from ten feet to twenty feet to make room for pedestrian infrastructure and landscaping. There will be taller buildings and they should make the streetscape softer.

Charlie Palmisano asked if setbacks include the stairs or just to foundation?

Rick Taintor stated it goes to building wall.

Jamie Pennington brought up a concern about the speed of cars.

Director Port stated this space would be more transitional. He is in favor of added distance from the street and wants to see bike path connections. He is not as bothered with buildings being as close. It is important to provide enough space to have extension of connectivity.

Jamie Pennington stated they are going to lose some units moving the buildings back.

Rick Taintor stated the first lot could stay at forty units per acre.

Charlie Palmisano stated they need to consider if these buildings are economically viable to build.

Bob Koup suggested three to four story buildings away from the street.

Jamie Pennington stated he thinks this is an awesome idea. He thinks enforcing a certain design thinking is fantastic.

Rick Taintor asked what kind of dimensions they would want for the planting strip for street trees.

Bob Koup stated in the range of six to eight feet, not a lot more than that. He suggested looking at the City of Boston standards. He specifically referred to the Seaport having texture in planting strips with adding cobblestones.

Rick Taintor asked if the board had any other ideas.

Director Port stated they would need this plan in the next couple of weeks. The sooner they have a plan the clearer they can be. The ZAG was comfortable with 40 units per acre on that lot.

Rick Taintor suggested moving the maximum front yard set back from ten feet to twenty feet. He stated it is more like a build-to line at twenty feet, not a max at twenty feet. He suggested to give a range.

Jamie Pennington stated this is not a location for flat facades.

Bob Koup asked if they should discuss retail.

Rick Taintor stated they allow it. They are not allowed to mandate mixed use.

Bob Koup asked if there had to be a retail component.

Director Port stated they should prepare for the future.

Charlie Palmisano stated he likes street lamps along sidewalks as it encourages walking.

Director Port that is the design per building. It is also part of the Planning Board's review. He then referred to ornamental fixtures at Waterfront West and the bike path.

Rick Taintor asked if 1 Boston Way is 10,000 feet.

Director Port stated it is 22,000 feet. A modification expanded 10,000 feet around the train station to allow up to 22,000 feet.

Rick Taintor asked if they needed a footprint limitation at all.

Director Port stated this provision does not apply to the sub district.

Bob Koup stated if we are proposing this density in a concentrated area, what about infrastructure?

Director Port stated the city is there. The sewer has been upgraded and can handle it. The primary concern is a bike path.

Rick Taintor asked, what could we ask for? As long as the development is as of right and we aren't having any discretion.

Director Port stated if the development is making impacts, and are they mitigated? Are there improvements in the immediate area? They would ask the developer for these things. Traffic and sewer are ones that won't come up.

Rick Taintor stated the next step is to draft language.

Rick Taintor asked if they need to have a draft zoning ordinance in June?

Director Port stated they do want to see those provisions.

Rick Taintor stated City Council will come up with some decision on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The Planning Board will meet again on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

***c) Other updates from the Chair or Planning Director***

Director Port stated the Harvard Kennedy School did some renderings for Storey Ave. They did some analysis and the spreadsheets took in as many variables as they could.

**5. Adjournment**

Bob Koup made a motion to adjourn. Jamie Pennington seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

**Motion Approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM

Respectfully submitted – Caitlyn Marshall