

Design Review Meeting
January 3, 2022
Virtual Meeting via ZOOM

Members In attendance:

Ken Savoie, Rue Sherwood, John Sarni, Linda Riley, Bob Weatherall, Laura Gresh

Ethan Parsons, Director Planning Department

Also Present: John Colantoni, Jim Juliano (lawyer for project), John Duggar (architect)

Citizens Query: None

Washington Station Village at 5-11 Washington Street

Developer John Colantoni presented changes to plans since last meeting.

Changes include:

- Setback of rear units 10 feet instead of 20 as shown in previous plans.
- One fewer unit -- 13 units are proposed instead of 14 presented previously
- One affordable unit is proposed.
- An outdoor gathering spot replaces gazebo in previous plan. Gathering area has a fire pit and circular seating area.
- Narrowing widths of driveways on Washington Street creates less footage for curb cuts.
- Existing trees in back of property will remain.
- 6 of 13 units will have roof decks.
- Square footage of units ranges from 1,200 – 2,500 square feet.
- 5 units have guest parking.
- Each unit will have different facades.
- Vinyl, Hardie plank and stone work will face the exterior facades.
- Height of all units is 39 feet and under.

Bob commented that cantilevered balconies shown on plans age poorly. He said 19th century vernacular architecture would have supports for balconies.

He said the hierarchy of windows should reflect 19th century window design with varying sizes -- 1st floor windows larger and longer, 2nd floor windows smaller than 1st and 3rd floor windows smaller than 2nd.

John Dugger said that code requires windows be large enough to allow for egress. He said the 1st floor windows could be larger.

Bob said the vinyl board and batten proposed is not an environmentally conscientious material. He said a good wood product would be preferable for the environment.

John Dugger said he thought Hardie plank would be a better replacement.

Bob suggested roof colors differ from each other a suggested differing shades of gray. He also suggested the colors of exterior siding be different than typical gray and white palette used in spec houses.

John Sarni said the design of exterior facades are too similar and don't reflect the look of an evolving neighborhood.

Laura said stone is shown for exterior façades and that at last meeting we discussed changing stone to brick. She thought 13 units was still one too many and thought 12 units with the units at corner of Mineral and Washington Streets be reduced from 3 to 2 units. Reducing to a 2-unit building would be appropriate for the streetscape and fit in the neighborhood. She also commented on the use of so many gables on façades.

John C. agreed that brick was discussed and that brick would be substituted for the stone.

Rue said the use of stone at patio is not attractive and that brick would be a better substitute. She suggested using wood and brick for materials which would be more inviting. She said the fire pit and grill was a nice addition. She also suggested removing the back of seating at circular seating.

Linda suggested a covered wooden swing.

John Sarni suggested having tables with umbrellas rather than the circular stone seating. This would allow small groups to gather to eat outdoors. He said wood would be a more comfortable than stone for seating.

Jim Juliano suggested the addition of Adirondack chairs.

John Dugger said the design was flexible.

John C. said these suggestions would be implemented.

Linda using of stronger and different colors for exterior of units – color variation would nice to see.

Ethan said the next presentations should reflect these suggested changes and refinements.

Bob asked for a landscape plan be presented at next meeting.

John C. said one person was taking the role of engineer and landscape designer.

Rue said plantings should be 70% native and that cherry trees are not native to this area.

John C. said fencing would be PVC.

Both Bob and Rue said cedar would be preferable for the environment and also for sound absorption.

Ken added that brick could also break up the use of multiple gables on front facades. He also suggested the use of hip roofs to break up the use of so many gables.

Bob made a motion to continue discussion of the project at next meeting on February 7th with the Planning Board meeting on February 17th. All voted in favor.

Having a special meeting on January 24th at 7 p.m. was proposed to allow for a dedicated discussion of DRB Design Guidelines.

Approval of minutes for previous meetings:

December 6, 2021 meeting -- Bob made a motion to approve the minutes for meeting on December 6, 2021. John seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

October 19, 2021 meeting – Ken made a motion to approve the minutes for meeting on October 19, 2021. Rue seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

November 1, 2021 meeting -- Ken made a motion to approve the minutes for meeting on November 1, 2021. John seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Ethan said he would circulate guidelines of Massachusetts proposal for increasing density in downtown areas.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes by
Laura Gresh

Minutes adopted 2/7/22