



Town of Ashland

MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

Select Board Meeting Room / Hybrid
Town Hall, 101 Main Street, Ashland, Massachusetts 01721

April 13, 2023, at 7:15 PM

Present: Tricia Kendall, Chair
Anna Tesmenitsky, Vice-Chair
Catherine Jurczyk, Clerk
Marcelo Arjona, Member
Deepa Venkat, Member

Absent: Kevin McClean

Others: Peter Matchak, Town Planner

Minutes Approved by the Planning Board on June 8, 2023



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1 **Call to Order**

2 Tricia Kendall called the meeting to order. She mentioned that it was the Planning Board's first in-
3 person and hybrid meeting in three years, and the session was being recorded and broadcast. Ms.
4 Kendall reviewed the meeting agenda.

5

6 **Clerk's Report**

7 Catherine Jurczyk, the Planning Board Clerk, reported that the board had received two email
8 correspondences since the March 23, 2023, meeting. One concerned the building, water, and sewer
9 moratoriums and the other concerned 10-60 Main St.

10

11 **9-49 Homer Avenue Site Plan and Special Permit Application – continued from March 9, 2023**

12 Mr. Matchak reported that the Planning Board and Design Review Committee members visited 9-49
13 Homer Ave. proposed mixed-use site last Thursday. The applicant submitted a revised Site Plan in
14 response to the fire department's request for greater access to the site. An email from Deputy Chief
15 Lyn Moraghan to the applicant stated that she and Chief Keith Robie reviewed the plan and asked for
16 additional turning ratios.

17

18 Attorney Terry Morris thanked the board for arranging the site visit and said a section of the site plan
19 was redesigned in response to several questions, including the need to accommodate the fire
20 department's 40 ft. box truck's turning radius and additional landscaping as depicted on the
21 landscape plan.

22

23 Ron Bourque, the project architect, reviewed an aerial view of the roof area and explained that the
24 mechanicals would be concealed. The building's second and third floors include residential units and
25 landscaped roof decks. He said the existing utility poles would remain in place, and the wires would
26 go underground, terminate at the first pole, and continue into the downtown core.

27

28 Mr. Bourque explained that a drop-off area to accommodate emergency vehicles was added to the
29 site plan in response to the fire department's criteria. He pointed out that a small lobby and trash
30 room were created with direct access from the parking at the rear of the site. Mr. Matchak noted
31 that adherence to a prescribed trash policy, snow removal, and lawn maintenance plans would need
32 to be added as conditions.

33

34 Mr. Bourque reviewed the elevation materials and noted that the design would align with the
35 architecture of the era and the downtown area instead of the specific architecture associated with
36 the Richardson train station across the street.

37
38 Mr. Bourque confirmed that he had documented the two mature trees' location on the site plan and
39 would verify ownership of the trees on the property line.

40
41 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for public comments.

42
43 Mark Dassoni, 49 Hawthorn Rd., asked the members to enable the podium camera and the table
44 microphones. He asked whether the building could support the planned second floor landscaped
45 area.

46
47 Joan Gonfrades said she is a member of the Historical Commission. However, her personal comment
48 was that she felt the building was too large for the area and preferred separate buildings. She also
49 asked about the building's heat pumps.

50
51 Ms. Tesmenitsky asked, and Mr. Bourque responded, that changing the design from one large to
52 multiple separate buildings with community-accessible courtyards would complicate the
53 underground parking plan.

54
55 Ms. Kendall questioned the value of a small park in front of the commercial space. She also asked
56 what the cost to the applicant would be to move the overhead utilities underground to continue the
57 improvements being made downtown.

58
59 Mr. Matchak stated that the timeframe to vote on the site plan expires on May 11, 2023. Therefore,
60 the site plan public hearing must be extended to a future date.

61
62 Ms. Jurczyk motioned to continue the 9-49 Homer Ave. public hearing until April 27, 2023. Ms.
63 Tesmenitsky seconded the motion; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and
64 Kendall-aye; vote of 5-0-0.

65
66 **10-60 Main Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – continued from February 23, 2023**

67 Mr. Matchak summarized that the members supported the two renderings that the applicant
68 presented at the last meeting and asked the applicant to continue with the design process. He
69 introduced Rich Gordon, the property owner, Joe Antonellis, the applicant's attorney, and Scott
70 Richardson, from Richardson Lewis Architects. He also noted that Associate Planning Board member
71 Kevin McClean, a voting member for the hearing in place of Ms. Venkat, is absent tonight, his first
72 absence from this open hearing. Mr. Matchak corrected the previous statement regarding the
73 attendance on Kevin McClean, Asso. Member. This meeting would be Mr. McClean's second absence
74 for the 10-60 Main Street application and therefore he will not be eligible to vote on the application.

75
76 Mr. Richardson displayed several images and views of the development that he said was more to
77 scale and representative of the site. He described the mill-designed buildings and their flanking

78 entrance into the center courtyard parking. Mr. Richardson said the large plaza would support a
79 kiosk area, outdoor dining, and community gathering space directly across from The Corner Spot.
80
81 Mr. Richardson explained the differences between the renderings and the proposed plan. He said
82 that the roof elevation on the renderings is 38 ft., and the materials spacing, modules, and texture
83 are about the same as the displayed elevation.
84
85 Ms. Kendall opened the meeting for comments from the public.
86
87 Helen Nicole, 4 Elliot Circle, commented that the building roofline and window appeared flatter, and
88 she was unhappy with the new rendering.
89
90 Alex Keefe, Pine Hill Rd., asked about soundproofing and traffic flow in the area. Mr. Richardson said
91 soundproofing standards would be met, and the traffic study is on the Planning Board website.
92
93 Mark Dassoni, 49 Hawthorn Ln., supported the new rendering.
94
95 Joan Gonfrades agreed with the comments regarding the rendering and expressed her
96 disappointment in the project's current direction.
97
98 Mr. Arjona asked if there was latitude to allow a different roof height to gain proportion without
99 changing the building. He also suggested a variation of materials for the brick façade, the window
100 proportion on each level, and the towers. Mr. Arjona asked to explore incorporating the woonerf or
101 a plaza concept.
102
103 Ms. Venkat agreed that a woonerf concept would open up the space.
104
105 Ms. Kendall noted that improvements were needed to the proportion of glass and brick.
106
107 Ms. Tesmenitsky asked if solar and a green roof were possible and would soften the roofline.
108
109 Ms. Jurczyk reminded the board to report the project's status to the Conservation Commission and
110 confirm the floodplain's jurisdiction.
111
112 The board asked the applicant to align the renderings and the computer model.
113
114 Ms. Kendall motioned to continue the 10-60 Main St. Special Permit and Site Plan Review public
115 hearing until May 11, 2023. Ms. Tesmenitsky seconded the motion; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye,
116 Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and Kendall-aye; vote of 5-0-0.
117
118 **Lot Release: Apple Ridge Definitive Subdivision Lot 14**
119 Mr. Matchak explained that in 1993 a house was built on lot 14 Apple Ridge Ln., and the subdivision
120 road was accepted. However, a title search revealed that the lot release from the original Covenant
121 was not recorded with the Registry of Deeds.

122
123 The board asked to postpone this agenda item to allow time to distribute the documentation.
124
125 **301 Pond Street Special Permit and Site Plan Review – continued from January 12, 2023**
126 Mr. Matchak explained that the 301 Pond St. application was the Shaw’s Redevelopment Plaza
127 project. The applicant submitted a letter dated May 16, 2023, requesting to withdraw the
128 application without prejudice. Although the hearing was not officially opened, Mr. Matchak said
129 \$4,802.96 for staff time and administrative fees should be withheld from the applicant’s filing fee of
130 \$31,000.
131
132 Ms. Jurczyk motioned to accept the application withdrawal without prejudice, subject to the
133 moratorium of reapplication under the period, and return of the submitted permit fees of \$31,000
134 less Town expenses of \$4,802.96. Mr. Arjona seconded the motion; Venkat-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-
135 aye, and Kendall-aye; vote of 4-0-0.
136
137 **Pre-Application Conference – Review document**
138 Ms. Kendall said the pre-application conference process would evolve to enhance its usefulness, and
139 updating the Planning Board web page with links to supporting information would help.
140
141 **Sustainability Checklist – Review document**
142 Ms. Kendall reported that she, Mr. Arjona, Cathy Roone and Ujwala Pawnarkar from the Design
143 Review Committee, and Matt Marshquist and Kara Hume from the Sustainability Committee updated
144 the document that was based on sustainability conditions from recent projects and from existing
145 checklists from the Sustainability Committee. The members agreed that the list should include best
146 practices, be continually revised, and exclude building code and ConCom requirements. They also
147 suggested eliminating PFAS (“forever chemical”) materials.
148
149 Margy Gassel, a resident, agreed that perfluorinated materials and artificial turf should be
150 eliminated. Artificial turf was eliminated from the list.
151
152
153 **Report on Planning Topics:**
154 **Scenic Roads Outreach**
155 Ms. Kendall reported that Alvaro Esparza, the Assistant Town Planner, is working to improve the
156 scenic roads page on the town’s website to ensure the information is clear. Mr. Matchak said a map
157 would be added to highlight the scenic roads.
158
159 Ms. Kendall said they are revisiting a suggestion to send a postcard to residents that live on scenic
160 roads to notify them of the web page.
161
162 **MBTA Communities**
163 No discussion.
164
165 **Economic Impact Tool**

166 Mr. Matchak said the work required to launch the tool is in progress.
167
168 Parking Memo
169 No discussion.
170
171 Reports on Board Members and Town Planner:
172 Comprehensive Plan
173 Mr. Jurczyk reported that applicants would be evaluated and presented to a joint Planning Board and
174 Select Board on May 11, 2023. It was noted that over 50 applicants applied for the Steering
175 Committee.
176
177 Sustainability Committee
178 No discussion.
179
180 Design Review Committee (DRC)
181 No discussion.
182
183 Inclusionary Zoning
184 No discussion.
185
186 Community Preservation Committee (CPC)
187 Ms. Kendall reported that Aaron Ladd, the CPC Chair, was invited to attend a Planning Board meeting
188 to discuss how CPC funds could be used for Planning Board-related projects.
189
190 Other
191 No discussion.
192
193 **Administrative Matters: future meetings, public hearings**
194 Future Joint Meeting with Upper Charles Trail Committee: April 27, 2033
195 Mr. Matchak said that Preston Crow, from the Upper Charles Trail Committee, is scheduled to attend
196 the April 27, 2023, Planning Board meeting.
197
198 Future Joint Meeting with Ashland Sustainability Committee: TBA
199 No discussion.
200
201 Future Retreat Date
202 No discussion.
203
204 Applications Received
205 Mr. Matchak reported that the application for the definitive subdivision, the Village at Clocktown,
206 was received. The filing of the preliminary subdivision predates the passage of the building
207 moratorium.
208
209 Next Meeting

210 The next meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2023.

211

212 Minutes Review

213 Mr. Arjona motioned to accept January 26, 2023, minutes as amended. Ms. Tesmenitsky seconded
214 the motion; Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 4-0-0.

215

216 Mr. Arjona motioned to accept June 27, 2022, joint Planning Board and Select Board minutes, as
217 amended. Ms. Tesmenitsky seconded the motion; Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-
218 aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 5-0-0.

219

220 ***Adjournment***

221 Ms. Kendall motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:11 pm. Ms. Tesmenitsky seconded the motion;
222 Venkat-aye, Tesmenitsky-aye, Arjona-aye, Jurczyk-aye, and Kendall-aye, with a vote of 5-0-0.

223