APPROVED
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 Woburn Planning Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m.

Chair Bob Doherty called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and asked people to silence their cellphones and noted the meeting was being recorded. Assistant Planner Karen Smith called the roll.

Mr. Jim Callahan, Ms. Claudia Bolgen, Mr. Kevin Donovan, Mr. David Edmonds, Ms. Carolyn Turner, Mr. Rob Klein and Chair Bob Doherty were in attendance. Planning Director John Cashell and Smith were also in attendance.

ANNUAL ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Doherty stated it is customary for the Planning Board to hold an annual election for Chair and Vice-Chair at the beginning of each calendar year.

Doherty asked if there were any nominations for the position of Chair.

Bolgen nominated Doherty for position of Board Chair;
Seconded by Edmonds;
Doherty asked if there any other nominations for Chair. There were none.

MOTION to close the nominations and elect Doherty to the position of Board Chair for the calendar year 2025 made by Bolgen;
Seconded by Edmonds;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

Doherty then asked if there were any nominations for the position of Vice Chair.

Bolgen nominated Callahan for position of Vice Chair;
Seconded by Edmonds.

Cashell asked if there any other nominations for Vice Chair. There were none.

MOTION to close the nominations and elect Callahan to the position of Vice Chair for the calendar year 2025 made by Bolgen;
Seconded by Edmonds;
MOTION Carried, 7-0-0.

LOT LINE RELOCATION PLAN OF LAND: 10, 12 and 14 CROSS STREET

Cashell stated Attorney Robert Tedesco submitted a plan on behalf of LRB Realty Trust, Louise Melaragni, Trustee, for a lot line relocation at 10-12 Cross Street and 14 Cross Street in Woburn.

Attorney Robert Tedesco has submitted a plan on behalf of LRB Realty Trust, Louise Melaragni, Trustee, for a lot line relocation at 10-12 Cross Street and 14 Cross Street in Woburn. The purpose of this plan is a request to create two buildable lots with the lot closest to the railroad right of way having the potential to build a duplex. Lot 1 will contain 19,277 square feet and Lot 2 will contain 12,875 square feet. The parcel at 14 Cross Street will continue to have sufficient frontage and both parcels are located in the R2 zoning district.

The Planning Director recommended the Board endorse the plan as one not requiring approval under the Subdivision Control Law.

MOTION to accept the Director's recommendation by Edmonds;

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Seconded by Turner;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED: 225 MERRIMAC STREET

Attorney Joseph Tarby, Rubin and Rudman, 500 Unicorn Park Drive, Woburn, MA represented New Boston Real Estate LLC for a lot line relocation at 225 Merrimac Street. Tarby stated the purpose of this plan is to divide the subject parcel (Lot 70 as shown on Land Court Plan 7312-3) by adding the former division line between Lots 70 and 14 as shown on Land Court Plan 7312E into two proposed lots. The parcel is located in the IP zoning district. Tarby stated both lots will have frontage on Merrimac Street and Lot 71 will also have frontage on New Boston Street. Both streets are public ways.

Planning Director Cashell recommended the Board endorse the plan as one not requiring approval under the Subdivision Control Law.

MOTION to accept the Director's recommendation by Edmonds;
Seconded by Callahan;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

PUBLIC HEARING ZONING MAP AND TEXT AMENDMENT:

Planning Director Cashell read aloud the Public Hearing notice that was published twice in the *Times* newspaper that stated:

PUBLIC HEARING ZONING MAP AND TEXT AMENDMENT: to amend the following: 1. The 1985 Woburn Zoning Ordinance, as amended, by adding a new entitled "Central Square Overlay District (CSOD)" as set forth in the petition; and 2. The Zoning Map of the City of Woburn by making thirteen (13) parcels of land as shown on a plan entitled "Overlay District Zoning Exhibit Plan" dated November 25, 2024, engineered stamped December 13, 2024, subject to Central Square Overlay District (CSOD), which include: 654 Main Street (36-09-31); 658 Main Street (36-03-01); 662 Main Street (36-03-02); 664 Main Street (36-03-03); 668 Main Street (36-03-04); 670 Main Street (36-03-05); 2 Lowell Street (36-03-06); 4 Lowell Street (36-03-07); 10 Lowell Street (36-03-08); 12 Lowell Street (35-11-06); 14 Lowell Street (35-11-07); 16 Lowell Street (35-11-08); and 660 Main Street (35-11-05). Guastavino Realty LLC by its Attorneys, Rubin and Rudman LLP.

Attorney Joseph Tarby, Rubin and Rudman, 500 Unicorn Park Drive, Woburn, MA introduced his applicant, Guastavino Realty LLC owner of 660 Main Street, Woburn along with the Development team of Mr. John Tocci, Sr. and Mr. Peter Carbone. Also present were civil engineers Tim Williams and Nicholas Dellacava. Tarby outlined the steps needed in the process to create the proposed Central Square Overlay District including the fact that the City Council can not approve a zoning amendment until they receive their Letter of Recommendation from the Planning Board. Once received, the City Council can vote to approve or disapprove the amendment. If approved, the applicant may then apply for a Special Permit before the City Council that most likely will include peer reviews including traffic and drainage studies. In terms of context and location, the proposed overlay is currently zoned R1 and S1.

Tarby stated the purposed of the CSOD is to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community by encouraging the redevelopment of the Central Square area; to ensure high quality site planning, architecture, and landscape design; to provide diversified housing; and to encourage adoption of energy efficient building practices and sustainable construction methods.

Tarby stated the key uses allowed by Special Permit and are subject to Site Plan Review and City Council approval by two-thirds vote include residential, general office under 25,000 square feet, medical/dental offices under 20,000 square feet, light manufacturing under 20,000 square feet, research and testing under 20,000 square feet, retail under 10,000 square feet, and accessory uses to the above listed uses.

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Tarby stated dimensional requirements to the CSOD include will include a minimum district size of 5 acres, minimum setback along Main Street of 10', minimum front yard setback of 15', minimum side yard setback of 25', minimum rear yard setback of 25', maximum building coverage of 40%, minimum usable open space of 25%, maximum number of residential units of 225, minimum parking spot will be 1.5/unit, parking for non-residential uses will be 2 spaces per 1,000 square feet, maximum building height at Main Street will be 39' and 3 floors, and the maximum building height will be 65' and 5 floors.

Tarby continued with the presentation describing the design context that will potentially include a total of 220 units and 216,000 gross square feet. Building A will contain 89,000 gross square feet and include 95 units and will be 5 stories. Building B will be 87,000 gross square feet and contain 93 units with first floor amenities and will also be 5 stories high. The townhouses along Main Street will be four buildings containing a total of 32 units, 3 stories and will be a total of 40,000 gross square feet.

Mr. John Tocci, Sr. of Guastavino Realty provided a history of the area and the property located at 660 Main Street often referred to as "Gussys". The Tocci family purchased the Guastavino Company's historic tile manufacturing building in 1999 from the Carbone family and moved their business to this location from 130 New Boston Street. Tocci spoke of the importance of balancing the preservation with modernization in addition to restoring the beautiful arch, terracotta tiles, the vault, dome, and spiral staircase designs. He spoke of the 12 different uses and small companies that once were housed in the building including a dance studio, television repair shop and a small engine repair shop. The location of the building in proximity to the Middlesex Canal played an important role in the manufacturing industry. Mr. Tocci emphasized how much he loves the property and his family-owned business that his grandfather started with these two brothers. His goal is a global vision to develop the whole area into something special and noted he recently purchased the fire station located at the entrance to his building with the hopes of improving the entire intersection which will in turn hopefully also provide the much-needed driveway improvements to the Boys and Girls Club.

Development team member Mr. Peter Carbone stated he is a real estate attorney in addition to a lifelong resident of Woburn whose family previously owned 660 Main Street. He stated this project will hopefully provide a chance to revitalize the area as it is an important gateway to the city. Carbone stated they have held a neighborhood meeting and have had many interactions with City officials to obtain input on what the city and residents envision for this area. The main building that currently exists will remain as is and is an integral part of the property. Carbone described potential traffic improvements to the Central Square area including the primary access for the Boys and Girls Club becoming part of the entryway into the Tocci development. He spoke of an emergency access drive that may be discussed in the future relative to the Fire Department and stressed there is no intention for it to become a primary or secondary way in or out of the property.

Carbone spoke of potential intersection improvements that will align Clinton and Main Street, align Eaton Avenue and Main Street, and will provide a new entrance for the Boys and Girls Club. Carbone spoke of the proposed Lowell Street/Main Street townhouses around the perimeter that are still in the active rendering stage and noted they will remain consistent with what is there today. There are about ten houses that are likely to be demolished on Main Street. Carbone stated there are approximately 20 total apartments in the existing ten houses and upon completion, the townhouses will consist of 32 units. Carbone also described the makeup of the two larger buildings proposed for the 660 Main Street property and the topography as it relates to how you enter the site. He noted the development will also include a pathway to assist the children that traverse from the Hurld/Wyman to the Boys and Girls Club in addition to the vision of a bike path.

Carbone stated the park will be expanded from 15,000 square feet to about 25,000 square feet and they will assist in the development and improvement of the amenity for the entire area as they are working with a landscape architectural firm.

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Carbone stated the two major upgrades the traffic engineers have recommended include purchasing the old fire station to line up Clinton Street with the entryway to 660 Main Street. The second major upgrade is to fix the situation at Eaton Avenue and Wilcox Circle that needs multi-phase timing and realigning. Carbone does not believe any easements or takings will be needed as the City currently owns the property that may be involved.

Relative to the economic benefits to the city, Carbone stated the project will increase real estate and vehicle excise tax from the current revenue estimate of $50,943 to $541,627 and it will generate approximately $1,016,233 in revenue from one time building permit fees.

In regards to drainage, Carbone stated he has engaged in conversation with several neighbors and city staff and acknowledged the project will fully comply with all storm water management regulations. He stated a large vast proportion of the runoff on site flows to the canal and there currently is very little treatment of it in that there are not many catch basins. Carbone stated that will change once the project moves forward and noted they are very cognizant of the issue.

Callahan asked Carbone to explain the area of potential traffic improvements at the Main and Eaton/Wilcox intersection in more detail relative to the possibility of needing takings and/or easements. Callahan specifically mentioned the area in front of the Wyman School that is City property that appears to be included as part of the enlarged intersection. Carbone mentioned the Wyman School and that specific intersection is not part of the proposed Overlay but it being mentioned in this discussion in relation to potential mitigation for traffic that may be generated from this specific project. The discussion let to potential generated trips and used Place Lane as a comparison while adding the observed number of vehicle trips is almost 40% lower than normal calculations would generate.

Callahan stated he feels the redevelopment and future plans of the Wyman School and the whole general area should be considered and discussed at the same time as the Overlay District. He mentioned area of the city that have office parks located behind residential neighborhoods that often become troublesome.

Chair Doherty inquired as to the ownership of the houses located along Lowell/Main Street and Tocci replied they own the majority of them and are in discussion of the remaining two or three and if they are not successful in purchasing them, they will amend the site plan. Carbone noted there is language in the proposed zoning amendment that states if a property does not participate within the Overlay District it does not underline zoning so that property can do whatever they want under the current zoning law.

Chair Doherty opened the **PUBLIC HEARING** and invited any audience member to step forward and speak.

Mr. John Curran, 2 Wyman Street, stated he has lived at that address for the entirety of his life. Curran mentioned the importance of considering the big picture of the entire Central Square area while preserving the character. He described some of the parcels as a little tired and underutilized and stressed there is an opportunity that needs to be balanced while preserving this unique business neighborhood.

Curran addressed the zoning proposal and stated his thoughts regarding that it was clearly presented by the petitioner. Curran noted the Special Permit process is vested in the City Council but feels the site plan should be vested with the Planning Board as he feels they have more expertise and resources in those areas. He stated although that would make for a less streamlined process, he feels it would protect the interests of the neighborhood by doing it that way.

Curran further stated the number of uses that are allowed by right in the proposed amendment should be lowered such as not including solar energy systems such as carports and ground mounted solar panels. In regards to height restrictions, he agrees with three stories but feels five stories may be too high which then speaks to the density of the project and feels 225 units is too much for the area. Curran stated if the building was reduced in size, it would improve the site line and would increase visibility to the hidden gem that is current building. Curran would also like

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to see some of the historic architecture from the Tocci building be incorporated into the design of the townhouses to capture the history of the neighborhood.

Curran stated he would like to the majority of the details of the project and elements of the plan worked out far in advance of the City Council or Planning Board adopting this zoning code to ensure the Special Permit application will be consistent with the proposal presented during the Zoning Amendment process. Curran stated he feels this may involve speaking with legal council on some of the conditions that can and can not be imposed through the zoning process and urged the Planning Board and City Council to ask for counsel in regards things such as restricting access onto Lowell Street, mitigation and possibility of potential grant funding that is not guaranteed. Curran stated because zoning is approved doesn't mean you will get all the infrastructure change that is currently being discussed as it may not be approved as part of the Special Permit. He stressed the importance of working these things out prior to approving the zoning amendment.

Curran summarized the density is aggressive, he is concerned about storm water, the importance of the walking path, traffic study needed and feels this is a good first step but noted a lot of work still needs to be done.

Ms. Cynthia Tocci, 16 Lowell Street, Woburn stated she is an abutter and stressed the need for attention to be drawn to the reworking of Lowell Street. She is also a member of the Facilities Committee for the Boys and Girls Club and stated they would welcome a new and improved egress to the Club. She noted the old houses on Main Street are not savable and feels the townhouse proposal would enhance the entry to the city along Main Street.

Mr. Greg Burlingame, 5 Sheila Avenue, Woburn stated he is a fan of the plan and the development. His concern is traffic and mitigation, specifically at the Lowell Street intersection.

Director Cashell stated he appreciated hearing from John Curran and acknowledged his experience. Cashell added there is a lot of traffic that needs to be properly managed and the city needs to start thinking broadly for the Central Square area including the Wyman School. Future traffic improvements must be properly managed for this project in addition to the impact on the Wyman School property being developed.

Director Cashell spoke to the idea that Board members may want to create an ad hoc committee to review the proposed zoning ordinance. As Mr. Curran pointed out, the proposal was created by the applicant and as economies change and a multitude of uses are prosed to be allowed within the zoning, it is important to know what it is that the City wants on the property to guaranteed what it will be in the future. Cashell feels consulting with the City Solicitor during the review is important, Cashell stated the Board may want to work in conjunction with the City Council in regards to the traffic peer review when it goes to City Council Committee and have a joint meeting.

Director Cashell recommended continuing the Public Hearing to date specific until the Board's next meeting which is scheduled for February 11, 2025 at 7:00 pm in the City Council Chamber. He stated he would work with City Clerk Lindsay Higgins to start the process of having the Planning Board and City Council combine for a collaborative effort in reviewing the proposed amendment and project.

MOTION by Edmonds to accept the Director's recommendation;
Seconded by Callahan;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

DISCUSSION (CONTINUED): PROCEDURAL RULES GOVERNING THE PLANNING BOARD

Director Cashell stated Doherty and Bolgen met and made edits to the working document and he will consolidate the draft and submit it to the City Solicitor for review.

UPDATE ON MGL PERMIT EXTENSION ACT

Cashell stated Governor Maura Healey recently signed into law Section 280 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024 that establishes an automatic two-year extension to certain permits and licenses. With limited exceptions, the Permit

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Extension Act automatically extends, for two years beyond its otherwise applicable expiration date, any permit or approval that was in effect or existence during the period beginning on January 1, 2023 and extending through January 1, 2025. Included among the permits and licenses covered by the act are municipal approvals such as special permits, variances, subdivision approvals, comprehensive permits, building permits, etc.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Director Cashell stated having the Planning Board Chair review and endorse ANR plans in between meetings has been working well and stated with light agendas it is not necessary to hold a meeting to endorse one ANR plan.

Chair Doherty inquired what the future holds for the old Wyman School building. Cashell stated many ideas are being discussed including mixed-use, senior housing, museum, cultural and art center to name a few. Residents express interest in seeing the castle remain in tact and noted the importance of a project to make financial sense.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Doherty asked members if they had reviewed the draft minutes of the October 22, 2024 meeting and were prepared to make a motion.

MOTION to approve the October 22, 2024 Planning Board draft minutes made by Bolgen;
Seconded by Edmonds;
MOTION carried, 6-0-1 (Donovan abstained).

Doherty asked members if they had reviewed the draft minutes of the December 10, 2024 meeting and were prepared to make a motion.

MOTION to approve the December 10, 2024 Planning Board draft minutes made by Bolgen;
Seconded by Edmonds;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

Bolgen asked Cashell if the Board could receive a proposed 2025 Planning Board meeting schedule and Cashell stated one would be emailed to members later in the week.

ADJOURNMENT

Doherty asked if there were any other business matters that may legally come before the Board not known at the time of posting. Cashell replied there were none.

Seeing no further business, MOTION by Bolen to adjourn the January 14, 2025 meeting at 8:35 pm;
Seconded by Edmonds;
MOTION carried, 7-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

APPROVED

Table of Documents Used and/or Referenced at the January 14, 2025 Meeting:

ANR PLAN AND APPLICATION: 10, 12 and 14 CROSS STREET
ANR PLAN AND APPLICATION: 225 MERRIMAC STREET
PUBLIC HEARING ZONING MAP AND TEXT AMENDMENT: Order for Zoning Text Amendment and Order for Zoning Map Amendment for Central Square Overlay District; Copy of Petitioners PowerPoint dated 1/14/2025.
UPDATE ON MGL PERMIT EXTENSION ACT: Copy of Section 280 of Chapter 238 of the Acts of 2024 from Mass.gov website.
Planning Department Staff Report and **Director's Report** both dated January14, 2025
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES: October 22, 2024 and December 10, 2023 meetings

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Smith

Karen Smith
Assistant Planner

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