



**CITY OF CHELSEA  
PLANNING BOARD**  
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Tuck Willis, Chairman

**CHELSEA PLANNING BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2017  
6:06 p.m.**

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CHELSEA, MA  
2017 APR 21 A 9:34

A meeting of the Chelsea Planning Board was called to order by the Chair at 6:05 p.m. on Tuesday, February 28, 2017 in Room 305 of City Hall, 500 Broadway, Chelsea, MA, with the following members in attendance: Shuvam Bhaumik, Christopher M. Falbo (6:20 PM), Sishar Rao, Todd Taylor, Tuck Willis, and Henry Wilson. Olivier del Melle, Lad Dell, and Ashley Owens were not present.

Also present: John DePriest, Director, Chelsea Department of Planning & Development; Maggie Schmitt, Assistant Director, Department of Planning & Development; Judi Barrett, RKG Associates.

**Minutes January 24, 2017 Minutes**

On a motion by Todd Taylor and seconded by Shuvam Bhaumik, it was voted unanimously (5-0-0) to waive the reading and to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2017 meeting.

**2016-46 200 Second Street – Baywood Hotels c/o Neil Patel**

*Permit recommendation and Major Site Plan Approval related to construction of a new one hundred and thirty-nine (139) room hotel.*

The Board reviewed a request by the Petitioner to continue the hearing to the April 25, 2017 meeting.

On a motion by Shuvam Bhaumik and seconded by Todd Taylor, it was voted unanimously (5-0-0) to continue the public meeting and public hearing to the April 25, 2017 meeting.

**2017-02 87 Parker Street – Jason Roback, Roback Development**

*Permit recommendation to demolish existing three-family structure and construct a twelve-unit structure.*

Jason Roback described the project. Proposing 12 unit building; a large underutilized lot. The building is in poor condition and not worth repairing. Mr. Roback has completed other projects in the City. The building is adjacent to a 12 unit building. The building will be well lit. All unit will be two bedroom, two baths. There will most likely be an elevator. The rents will be market rate and will probably be held for rentals. Mr. Roback is currently finishing the church building on Webster and completed 81 Beacon Street as well. The building will be five stories. The garage is enclosed, and each lift unit will be deeded to one unit. With the change in the off-street parking requirement from 1.5 to 1.0 per unit, the removing the lifts is a possibility. Rental values are around \$1800 for these units. It is a high density area, with Spencer lofts and the soon to be constructed French Club building in close proximity.

The Department report states that there is an issue with backing out of some spaces due to the location of the dumpster; the Petitioner disagreed.

The site borders the Eastern Avenue industrial area. The Petitioner was asked if he would provide an affordable unit and responded affirmatively.

Will not use the mechanical lifts.

On a motion by Todd Taylor and seconded by Shuvam Bhaumik, it was voted unanimously (5-0-0) to recommend that the Zoning Board of Appeals approve the two proposals with standard conditions, no mechanical lifts, one affordable unit, a submittal of a landscape plan, assure that all parking spaces are accessible, and that the bike racks are relocated to not interfere with snow management

**2017-03            95A & 97 Bellingham Street – Carmen Riccio**

*Permit recommendation to convert a two-unit structure to a three unit structure.*

The Petitioner did not attend the meeting.

On a motion by Henry Wilson, and seconded by Shuvam Bhaumik, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) to continue the case to the March 28, 2017 meeting.

**2016-34            21 Lafayette Avenue – Chelsea Jewish Nursing Home**

*Request to amend site plan.*

David Luciano and Chad Nelson described the revisions. Most of the project was finished by end of January, but a number of things have to be addressed in the spring. The proposal for the 5 foot fence was made because prior to the start of the work, it was assumed that the existing fence was in poor condition; however, it turns out that the fence is in much better condition than expected. The fence end on the north will be improved with a return fence to the wall. Also asking for a Cape Cod berm on the north and east side and keep the concrete berm at the entrance. The lot will be plowed toward the northerly side to push the snow on the landscaped area. The Petitioner claims that concrete is more susceptible to salt damage. The approved plan for lighting showed four light poles; asking to delete the poles and place additional lights on the existing poles to cover the new portion of the lot. The Department's report is correct in stating that some of the lot is dark. Perhaps they will keep some of the new poles. The back corner will be occupied.

On a motion by Shuvam Bhaumik and seconded by Todd Taylor, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) that the Site Plan be approved with an asphalt berm, the installation of one of the new light poles, and the submittal of a revised site analysis to the Department of Planning and Development for its review and approval.

**Department of Planning and Development – Housing Study Discussion**

Maggie Schmitt from the Department of Planning and Development introduced the purpose of the meeting. There will be a community meeting on March 21, with notices to be sent out soon. Judi Barrett of RKG Consultants, the Department's consulting firm, discussed the goals of the housing study. Ms. Barrett passed out a project schedule and a summary of the City's demographics. The study will last into June or July. The plan will include a housing needs assessment - who needs housing not being provided by the market, how does the market respond to demand, how do you provide enough choices in housing without exceeding demand? The first public meeting is on March 21<sup>st</sup>; there will be an overview of findings to date – this is what we see thus far, are we missing something? The goals will also be discussed at that meeting. Will

move from the needs assessment and establishment of needs to how do you get there – a strategic plan. There will be another community meeting later in the process to discuss the recommendations of the plan.

Will be activating an online survey in the next week or so. The intent is to get an idea of people's perceptions about housing. This meeting is different from the Broadway circulation study meeting in that it is focusing on housing. Mr. Falbo discussed how he bought a condo unit many years ago, he got married and still had room, but things got tight when a child was born. There was an open house a few doors down during a major snowstorm; there was a line down the street of potential buyers. At a later open house, a couple was there looking for a unit for their son. An offer \$35,000 over asking was not enough to secure the unit.

Mr. Willis expressed concern that the study will not have an impact. Concerned that municipalities do not have the capacity to make changes. Ms. Barrett stated that local communities can do many things, but cannot do everything. Inclusionary zoning is helpful, but not a total solution.

Concern that the Council wants to put a moratorium on development. The private sector has to participate and bring in funds for infrastructure and jobs. Todd Taylor stated that the City needs to bring in private developers to make the big changes, referring to the Chelsea Housing Authority proposal for the Innes Apartments. Shuvam Bhaumik stated that the perception of the private developers need to be changed.

Christopher Falbo spoke about a neighbor with moderate income who rents an apartment. The apartment was purchased and the rent was increased \$700 a month with no improvements made to the unit. Mr. Bhaumik stated that his condo unit increased significantly since it was purchased. There needs to be a change in perception about change in the City.

Mr. Taylor stated that the focus seems to be primarily on renters. He stated that the market causes a lot of moving from one unit to another, that moving because of limited affordability is part of life. A number of the people moving to the City are not engaged in the community; it is always the same people who show up at public meetings. Mr. Taylor pointed out that the boards may not get as many homeowners as property owners at meetings, so the findings may be skewed. Ms. Barrett pointed out that 72% of the population is renters.

Henry Wilson stated that he is a property owner, but also a landlord. He tries to keep good tenants by keeping rents low.

Sishar Rao spoke of how units are purchased and due to costs of mortgages and water rates, needs to charge more for rents. Shuvam pointed out that a lot of what happens with housing in Chelsea is tied to what happens to housing in Boston. Ms. Barrett pointed out that the study is looking at the market beyond Chelsea to see how it affects the City's market.

Who is coming here with development plans? Are they small developers or large developers. The majority are the smaller developers with 1 to 2 bedrooms. Who do they think is the market? Young professionals who can't afford Boston. Young professionals from Boston.

Anybody building product for seniors? No.

Todd Taylor talked of how the City for many years was trying to attract a middle class. Dr. Rao stated that some tenants are subletting without landlord's knowledge. What happens when the overcrowded units are regulated: the renters move to other markets. Chelsea would be well served to bring in more homeowners, but that will displace renters.

Cash offers for housing is on the rise. Shuvam Bhaumik stated that he was told by the police that they like the large developments because they generally do not result in a lot of police calls. There needs to be a change in perception about the City; people always say 'did you see what happened in Chelsea?' ignoring that the same unfortunate events happen in Boston and other cities.

Ms. Barrett told the Board that she did take a tour of the City. She asked the Board to think about how the study could help the Board as policy people. How do you get people to take the road to ownership: is it an education process? How do you get them from renter to owner?

There is a need to encourage small landlords; there is a difference between a landlord and a slumlord. When you own, you become more involved in the City.

Prior to rolling out the plan, may ask some of the members to provide some feedback.

### Election of Officers

John DePriest informed the Board that he asked Lad Dell and Ashley Owens if they intended to seek an office and if they would mind holding the election in their absence. Mr. DePriest stated that the two members indicated that they did not intend to seek an office and that they did not have a concern with the Board holding an election in their absence.

The following slate was proposed:

Chair: Todd Taylor nominated Tuck Willis: seconded by Sishar Rao, The vote was unanimous (6-0-0).  
Vice-Chair: Sishar Rao nominated Shuvam Bhaumik: seconded by Henry Wilson. The vote was unanimous (6-0-0),  
Clerk: No nominations were offered at this time

On a motion by Henry Wilson and seconded by Todd Taylor, it was voted unanimously (6-0-0) to adjourn at 8:14 PM.

  
Minutes Approved

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