



CITY OF CHELSEA, MA
Planning Board

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Tuck Willis
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Vice Chair
Indira Alfaro
Member
Joan Cromwell
Member
Mimi Rancatore
Member
Sylvia Ramirez
Member
Alejandra Rodriguez
Member
Todd Taylor
Member

CHELSEA PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2019

A meeting of the Chelsea Planning Board was called to order by Chair, William "Tuck" Willis, at 6:25 pm on Monday, April 1, 2019 in Chelsea City Hall, Room 305, 500 Broadway, Chelsea, MA with the following members in attendance: Joan Cromwell, Mimi Rancatore, Alejandra Rodriguez, Todd Taylor and Tuck Willis.

Also present: John DePriest, AICP, Director of Planning & Development
Lad Dell, Planner and Land Use Administrator, Planning & Development
Mimi Graney, Downtown Coordinator, Planning & Development

Public Meeting/Hearing Petitions

Zoning Amendments: to properly regulate improvements to business districts, including but not limited to outdoor cafes, signage and façade improvements.

John DePriest gave a PowerPoint presentation outlining the eight zoning amendments including the definition of outdoor cafes and their relation to the table of principal use regulations, prohibited materials, special dimensional regulations, ADA compliance, dark sky lighting and performance standards.

On a motion by Todd Taylor and seconded by Mimi Rancatore, **it was voted (5-0-0) to recommend approval of the 8 zoning amendments.**

John DePriest gave a PowerPoint presentation on Signs and Illumination in the business districts and explained that these proposed amendments would allow for more flexibility and creativity for businesses to advertise and improve their facades. Previously, the ordinances only allowed for one sign. If approved, the changes would allow for sign bands, projecting signs, awnings and sidewalk signs.

Mimi Rancatore asked if signs can be lit for 24 hours. Mimi Graney responded that businesses must comply with the international dark sky association guidelines.

Mimi Rancatore asked if the Board could limit how many sidewalk signs could be permitted per side of a street or limit it to one per business.

Marianne Winship (62 Beacon) is completely opposed to sidewalk signs and sees them as cluttering and obstructing.

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PLANNING BOARD

Maureen Cawley (150 Captains Row) thanked the Planning Board and the City for soliciting comments from the community. She doesn't own a car and really depends on the downtown district. She appreciates the efforts to attract and improve businesses in the downtown, but she's concerned about the area gentrifying.

Diego Agudelo owns a business at 172 Broadway and currently has a hanging sign that is made out of plastic. He asked what would happen if the ordinance changes. Mimi Graney responded that all signs prior to the zoning ordinance change would be grandfathered in and allowed to remain.

Mimi Graney spoke about the guidelines created for façade improvements for businesses in the downtown and the intention to improve visibility and increase activity. She mentioned that there will be grants available for businesses to make façade improvements.

Eddie Contreras is a business owner at 142 Broadway and looks forward to giving his business a facelift. He brought in conceptual plans and renderings.

John Dunning (62 Beacon) would like there to be more enforcement of signs, particular ones that are lit "open" after the business has closed and for signs that are in disrepair.

Todd Taylor stated that you can't limit the number of sidewalk signs that are allowed per street, but that you could perhaps limit it to one per business.

On a motion by Mimi Rancatore to include an amendment that limits one sidewalk sign per business and seconded by Todd Talyor, it was voted 5-0-0 to include the amendment.

On a motion by Todd Taylor and seconded by Joan Cromwell, **it was voted (5-0-0) to recommend approval of the zoning amendment, Sec. 34-109. – Signs and illumination, with the provision that limits one sidewalk sign per business.**

Zoning Amendments: to add *Short-Term Rentals* as a new definition to Section 34-241 – Definitions and as a Use to the list of Residential Uses in Subsection A of Section 34-300, The Table of Principal Use Regulations.

John DePriest gave a PowerPoint presentation describing the definition of a Short-Term Rental and the zoning areas in which it would be permitted in the Table of Principal Use Regulations.

Todd Taylor questioned the wording of the definition and in particular if having it set at "a period of fewer than thirty-one (31) consecutive days" would conflict with those who currently rent on a month-to-month basis (tenant at will).

With the permission of the Planning Board, John DePriest asked if the Department could develop new language regarding this.

On a motion by Mimi Rancatore and seconded by Todd Taylor, **it was voted (5-0-0) to recommend approval of zoning amendments for Short-Term Rentals with the provision that the Department of Planning & Development would develop new language for the definition.**

Zoning Amendments: to amend Section 34-156, Inclusionary Housing, to replace the existing definition of "Qualified income eligible household", at least 15 percent of the dwelling units shall be affordable housing units providing a mix in equal quantities at or below 30 percent

AMI, 50 percent AMI and 80 percent AMI, the fee in lieu of providing one or more AHUs shall be a minimum of \$400,000 per required AHU not provided within the development.

Todd Taylor acknowledged the need for affordable housing but questioned why Chelsea should bear the disproportionate burden for providing the housing stock for it. He was particularly concerned about the low rate of home ownership in the city at 21%. He feels that too many rental units are being created and not enough ownership opportunities.

City Councilor Leo Robinson asked the question what is really affordable in Chelsea. He mentioned that area median income of the Greater Boston Area is not applicable for Chelsea and that there is a need for greater affordability at different levels (AMI 30%/50%/80%).

On a motion by Joan Cromwell and seconded by Mimi Rancatore, **it was voted (5-0-0) to recommend approval of the zoning amendment for Sec. 34-156, Inclusionary Housing.**

Other Business

Election of Officers

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Board Discussion: Zoning and Development Case Review

This item was tabled until the next meeting.

Adjournment

On a motion by Todd Taylor and seconded by Joan Cromwell, it was voted (5-0-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:



Chair