



CITY OF CHELSEA, MA
Planning Board

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Tuck Willis, Chair
Regina Taylor, Vice Chair
Christian DeJesus Franco, Clerk
Jessica Arbaiza, Member
Eric Czernizer, Member
Mimi Rancatore, Member
Sarah Ritch, Member
Nick Valentine, Member

John DePriest, Staff
William Cecio, Staff

CHELSEA PLANNING BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025, 6pm

A meeting of the Chelsea Planning Board was called to order by the Chair, at 6:07 PM on Tuesday, April 22nd, 2025, in the City Council Chambers of City Hall with the following members in attendance: Christian DeJesus Franco, Mimi Rancatore, Sarah Ritch, Regina Taylor, Nick Valentine, Tuck Willis

Also present:

Will Cecio, Planner/Land Use Administrator, Planning Board Staff
John DePriest, Director, Dept of Permitting & Land Use Planning
Adam Roy, Planning Intern

Absent:

Eric Czernizer
Jessica Arbaiza

Approval of Minutes from March 25th, 2025 meeting:

*Decision: On a motion made by Sarah Ritch and seconded by Regina Taylor, the Board voted to **WAIVE** the reading and **APPROVE** the March 25th, 2025 meeting minutes.*

*Vote: **6-0-0** (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Public Meetings/Hearings:

2024-26 105-115 Park Street, 12 Essex Street, 1 Ellsworth Street – 115 Park St LLC

For a recommendation on a Special Permit and Variance seeking approval to demolish two structures and for the construction of a one hundred twenty (120) residential dwelling unit structure with seven (7) first floor retail units, and

For Major Site Plan Review seeking approval to demolish two structures and for the construction of a one hundred twenty (120) residential dwelling unit structure with seven (7) first floor retail units, and

For Special Permit seeking approval to construct a planted screen of less than ten feet between the BR and R2 Districts

Rick Salvo and David Choi explained that the project is on the old Pollo Compero and the laundromat/grocery store building behind it. It is 26, 880 square feet in size. The property fronts on Park, Ellsworth and Congress, and Essex Streets. The proposal is to demolish all existing on site buildings and to construct 120 units and retail. The upper-level parking will exit on Essex Street and the lower level on Ellsworth Street. Utilities will be from Park Street. The roof will drain to the stormwater system.

Anthony Rossi said that there will be 15 2-bedrooms, 95 1-bedrooms, and 10 3-bedroom units. There will be 18 affordable units. There are seven retail units on the first floor, which are capable of being combined. There are 102 market rates units. A traffic report was completed.

Scott Borden, Vanasse Associates, reported that they have undertaken traffic counts, and John DePriest helped to identify the study area. It is expected that the retail spaces will be frequented by people in the neighborhood. Demographics show that about half of the people in the neighborhood do not commute to work and about 36% do not own vehicles.

Anthony Rossi explained that the applicant worked with the City on the design. Commercial is included because the City wants to see retail on the first floor. Time was taken to come up with a design that the City wants to see in that neighborhood. The relief required is limited to yard setbacks. He owner did talk with the abutter residential building owner to see if it could be bought, but the owner was not interested in selling.

Nick Valentine: How will the parking be distributed? The owner will distribute them in accordance with the need of the tenants. The intent is to limit the number of spaces for the tenants and allocate them for the retail, to the extent that they can. The parking will be assigned to tenants if needed. The tenants will not be able to participate in the sticker parking program. The spaces can be shared base don time of use (residents overnight, commercial users during the date.).

Christian DeJesus: Why so many 1-bedrooms? Mr. Rossi said that there are fewer school-age children in the smaller bedroom units and that there will probably be more demand for off-street parking for the larger bedrooms.

Mimi Rancatore: the building has 120 units with only two elevators: will they need more elevators? Also, the commercial units will be a disaster: why not a community center? It could be designed with a park under the building Chelsea is a family-oriented community and it needs family housing. Where is the trash disposal? There is no indication of bicycling accommodation. Mr. Rossi: There are 25 2- and 3-bedroom units. The project has to make financial sense. The commercial space was included to meet the City's need. There is bike storage and trash disposal. Christian DeJesus Franco: the Duo apartment elevators are spaced far from the units. Mr. Rossi: Triple net leases do not work in Chelsea: the cost would be such that they could lease in Boston for less. Regina Taylor: what type of tenants do you see in the commercial spaces? Mr. Rossi said that he likes to see coffee shops, boutique clothing, private yoga studio, and uses that work for the neighborhood in his buildings and foresees similar here. Regina Taylor: where will trash storage be? Mr. Rossi: trash will be disposed of with private pick-up. Mr., Choi: the space will be in the back of the house, but it has not been filed yet. Regina Taylor: what are the measurements of the units: Around 340 sq ft – micro-sized units. Regina Taylor: How do you guarantee that there are not extra occupants in the smaller units? Mr. Rossi: The lease identifies the tenant and specifically does not allow for extra occupants?

Nick Valentine: There are a laundromat and convenience store on the site: will they be replaced: Mr. Rossi: the applicant said that he will work with the business owners to relocate them. Regina Taylor: deeply concerned about the lack of parking: the 2- and 3-bedroom units will demand more spaces: the weather requires comfortable commuting, Mr. Rossi: The building at 52 Washington Street has 30 units with no parking.

Sarah Ritch: Please walk us through the water recharge system. Mr., Rossi reminded the Board that there is no recharge system on the site. The roof drainage will drain to a Cultec system.

Opened to the public at 7:00 PM:

Sandy Maynard, Chester Ave: There is a housing crisis, but it is not meeting community need: The units are small and the tenants will own cars. There are not enough affordable units: 18 units is a token gesture. Traffic is an issue already and there is more study required. The project will exacerbate displacement. The outreach needs to be bilingual.

Brett Angel, 100 Pearl Street. The project is way too big for the area. The traffic in the area is bad when school gets out.

Mary Ann Brown, 100 Pearl Street. It is out of scale for the neighborhood. There is limited green space. The area is congested with traffic, which is exacerbated by the school release period and the bridges. What are the plans when construction takes place?

Mark Lederman, 37 Congress Avenue: He is the owner of the building. The building height is twice the height of anything other building in the neighborhood. The density is too high. Traffic and parking are an issue. Ellsworth is a narrow street. The parking across the street is used for parking at the school. He managed buildings with small units: they all had cars. The Cultech system will negatively affect his property. Ellsworth Street is 10-feet wide: difficult to get his pick-up truck down that street.

Monica Elias, 44 Prospect Ave, representing Green Roots. (see the Green Roots letter) The units are not affordable to most residents. Need family sized units. Concerned about displacement of businesses. Does not reflect the character of the development. Ask for meaningful redesign – more affordability, more family sized units.

Oscar Figueroa, 69 Pearl Street. The traffic is an issue: The units are too small. The amount of parking is insufficient

Councilor Manuel Tesche, District 7, 188 Broadway. Chelsea is going in a good direction. Welcome development, but too many 1-bedroom apartments. The City needs more family units. Revise the design: come back with revisions.

John Margello, 77 Pearl Street: Chelsea needs to move forward, but the project needs to be tweaked to meet the needs of the community. Needs more public input. Traffic is horrendous. People are going to have cars. Parking is already an issue for the existing commercial units. The size and number of units should be reviewed. The laundry and convenience store should be brought into the project.

Juliana Hernandez, 31 Cary Avenue: The small units are pushing out families.

Ann Vanata, 44 Fifth Street: The traffic and parking are a nightmare. Concerned about traffic during construction. There is a need for affordable housing.

Mr. Rossi: Will look into the size of the units. As far as affordability, it meets the inclusionary zoning requirement. Increasing family housing units also increases parking demand. Comments were made about the height and lot size, but the proposal meets the requirements. The site is almost 25,000 square feet in size. The project is four lots combined into one and it makes economic sense to construct that way. The roof deck will be for the residents: it is 8,000 square feet in size. New construction formats cater to a different clientele. A figure of \$2300 rents was bandied about: no idea where it came from as he and his client have never discussed it. There will be designated pick-ups for Uber and the like. His client cares about Chelsea and does not rent at \$2300/unit. Davis Choi: Only about 25% of the population are bike users. The building could be met to be allowed by right. There will be about 35 spaces for bikes. There will be a bike rack system.

Sarah Ritch: Could there be a rent-to-own system? Anthony Rossi: financing condominiums is difficult. Given the interests these days, it is cheaper to rent than to buy. They are being built to condominium standards.

Mr. Rossi: A project of this size will require a construction management plan. The Cultech camber has been proven to work. The traffic analysis is being done. Willing to table the discussion to see if modifications can be done.

Regina Taylor: which units will be affordable? Must be an equal amount relative to the number of units – 15% 1 BR, 15% 2BR, etc.

Nick Valentine: When will the traffic study be ready? Mr. Rossi: in two weeks.

Will Cecio: Reminded the Board that there is a plan to make improvements to the intersection

John DePriest: recommend that the Board continue the meeting: applicant must provide a detailed planting plan.

Decision: *On a motion made by Regina Taylor and seconded by Nick Valentine, the Board voted to CONTINUE the hearing until the May 27th meeting to allow for the presentation of the traffic report.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

2025-02 18, 24 Grandview Road – Elmer Castillo

For a recommendation on a Special Permit and Variance seeking approval for a subdivision and the construction of a two-family dwelling at 18 Grandview Road with an existing one family dwelling to remain at 24 Grandview Road which fails to meet the following: Lot 1 – 24 Grandview Road, fails to meet the minimum requirements for lot size. Lot 2 – 18 Grandview Road, fails to meet the minimum requirements for lot size, frontage side yard setback, combined side yard setback, front yard setback, and off-street parking as well as maximum requirement for lot coverage

Rebecca Edmondson-Korom, Esq.: Introduced the team. The building has been shrunk by about 4' all around. The patio has been recessed; pervious pavers placed as needed. There is only one tandem parking area. Now compliant with side yard setback and the lot coverage has been reduced from 47% to 36%.

Aldemir Tosca: Made the units as a two-decker, each with 1200 square feet. The building design reflects more closely the architecture of the buildings adjacent to it. He described the shadow study.

Regina Taylor: Design much improved. How do you gain access to the second floor: Mr. Tosca: Through interior stairs.

Mimi Rancatore: The winter shows shadows at 6 PM in the winter: the sun is down way before that. The tandem parking is difficult: difficult to pull out: Attorney Edmondson-Korom: there are at least 8 driveways on that street, one owned by her client, who has no problem accessing the street.

Sarah Ritch: what will be shaded that wasn't shaded before? Architect: a portion of the abutting property and a portion of the street.

Buffard: Cotes Street Peabody; placing the line under the garage to avoid adjacent properties. Sized for 25-year storm. Currently vacant lot, stormwater either infiltrates or runs to the street. After construction, 90% of stormwater will be sent to the sump under the garage. Sarah Ritch: The garage slopes to the street? Yes, by about 1/2".

Opened to the public at 8:24 PM

Valerie Green, 14 Grandview Road, Provided several photos of the site. The development will hinder vies from her property. There are 4 garages on the street. She cannot use hers because her vehicles will not fit. Will change the whole street. The sun rises in the front of her building and sets in the rear.

Mary Gerasse, 50 Fremont Avenue. Valerie cannot use her garage, so she parks in the curb cut. She will lose light on her home. The water concerns about groundwater, not the stormwater. The stormwater system could change the direction of the water to the neighbors across the street. The lot on the other side of 24 Grandview recently installed a driveway, losing two on-street parking spaces. The lots across the street are set lower than the street and cannot have on-site

Attorney Edmondson-Korom: The lot was separated by an ANR process in 1988 and it was a developable lot then. He is trying to create housing for his children. There are 16 2-families and 1 3-family residences in the neighborhood.

Berta: Trying to provide for privacy between the lot and the abutter.

Sarah Ritch: Have you discussed the landscaping with the abutters? Berta: No, but they can be flexible and they are amendable to talking with her.

Sarah Ritch: why did you not combine the lot . Mr. DePriest: Would not allow for additional construction as it is in the R1 District and only 1- and 2-family structures are allowed

Mary Gerasse: Valerie’s house has a mother-in-law unit. The houses are 1-families with mother-in-law units.

Barbara Wallach, 23 Grandview Road: There are 2-families on Grandview Roads.

John DePriest: How high is the retaining wall near the drive and the shrubs above it: concerned about the sight distance from the drive. Berta: The wall is 2.5 feet at the property line, sloping down to 6” at the garage.

Mimi Rancatore; not in support: parking is a concern of the neighborhood; it is too dense.

Decision: *On a motion made by Mimi Rancatore and seconded by Regina Taylor, the Board voted to CONTINUE the hearing to the May 27th meeting.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Other Business:

2009-12 324 Marginal Street – Enterprise Rent – A – Car Company of Boston

Request for a Modification of a Site Plan to allow the introduction of a truck wash bay, the demolition of an existing building and introducing a fire lane

Requesting a modification to demolish a portion of the existing administration building, add a truck wash to the site, and reconfigure some of the parking. One curb cut will be closed off. A new tank will be added to the existing tank. A trench drain in front of the main building will be rebuilt, extended, and connected to the existing drainage structure on the site. There will be landscaping improvements. A drainage and O&M plan were submitted to the City for review. Will be filing with the ConComm in the next week or two.

Nick Valentine: What does the inclusion of diesel fuel mean for reoperations? Doug: Moving their truck lease from 121 Eastern Ave to this site, so its fuel for the trucks. Nick: Does it mean more fuel deliveries since the supply is cut? The trucks are leased long term, so refills are not frequent.

Decision: *On a motion made by Sarah Ritch and seconded by Christian DeJesus Franco, the Board determined the modifications to be MINOR.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Merritt Road – Street Discontinuance

Public Hearing to discuss and vote on the discontinuance of Merritt Road

Will Cecio explained that the City has received a request to discontinue the roadway. It is a paper street; it was approved but never constructed.

Decision: *On a motion made by Mimi Rancatore and seconded by Christian DeJesus Franco, the Board voted to APPROVE the discontinuance of Merritt Road.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Motion by Sarah Ritch to postpones the Master Plan Update and the ADU discussion to the May 27th meeting, Seconded by Nick Valentine, Unanimous.

Proposed Zoning Amendment Discussion

Discussion of a potential zoning amendment to Section 34-106(j)(6) as it relates to the prevention of on-street parking stickers when zoning relief from any parking requirements is granted

Will Cecio explained that the current off-street parking regulations prohibits tenants from obtaining on street stickers for any noncompliance with parking regulations. The Department is looking at recommending an amendment to limit the ineligibility to just those that do not meet the number of required spaces. Mimi Rancatore: Would like to see a review of the entire parking regulations.

Councilor Santagate, 221 Shurtleff: Does not want to eliminate the ineligibility for on-street parking entirely

Decision: *On a motion made by Regina Taylor and seconded by Sarah Ritch, the Board voted to FORWARD the zoning amendment to the City Council for consideration.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Chelsea Master Plan Updates

Update on City’s efforts to develop a Master Plan

Decision: *On a motion made by Sarah Ritch and seconded by Nick Valentine, the Board voted to CONTINUE this agenda point to the May 27th meeting.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

ADU Zoning Amendment Discussion

Continued discussion on a potential Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) zoning amendment

Decision: *On a motion made by Sarah Ritch and seconded by Nick Valentine, the Board voted to CONTINUE this agenda point to the May 27th meeting.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Adjournment:

Decision: *On a motion made by Christian DeJesus Franco and seconded by Mimi Rancatore, the Board voted to ADJOURN the meeting at 9:32pm.*

Vote: *6-0-0 (Tuck Willis – Yes, Regina Taylor – Yes, Christian DeJesus Franco – Yes, Mimi Rancatore – Yes, Sarah Ritch – Yes, Nick Valentine – Yes).*

Minutes Approved
William Cecio, Planning Board Staff