



TOWN OF
STONEHAM
MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD
781-279-2695

STONEHAM PLANNING BOARD MEETING

(in accordance with provision of M.G.L. c.30A, §§ 18-25)

Wednesday, June 12, 2024

Town Hall Hearing Room

7:00 PM

Members Present: Chair Frank Vallarelli, Vice Chair Kevin Dolan, Daniel Moynihan, Jr, Marcia Wengen and Terrence Dolan. Associate member William Perry was also present to sit on the Special Permit for Rockville Park.

Also present at the meeting: Town Clerk Maria Sagarino acting as Planning Board Clerk, Attorney Charles Houghton, Jeff Rhuda from Symes Development. Mike Santullo of Sanco Builders, Walt Woo of Stantec Consulting, Park Street residents David & Judy Schurgin and Glendale Road resident Dan Votipka.

The Chair brought the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and introduced the members of the Board that were present and explained the procedure for the public hearings this evening.

The Board confirmed the meeting schedule for July-December to be the second Wednesday of each month.

Mr. Vallarelli moved on to approval of minutes. Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to approve the minutes from February 14, 2024. Mr. Moynihan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor 4-0 with an abstention from Mr. K. Dolan.

Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to approve the minutes from March 13, 2024. Mr. K. Dolan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to approve the minutes from April 10, 2024. Mr. Moynihan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to approve the minutes from May 8, 2024. Mr. Moynihan seconded the motion. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Vallarelli turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Kevin Dolan to deal with the matter of the bond reduction for the subdivision at Isola Lane as he had previously recused himself.

Attorney Houghton appeared before the Board on behalf of Symes Development for the Isola Lane bond reduction. The DPW Director had recommended that 10% be held back on the release as a contingency. Mr. Houghton argued that 5% was more appropriate. He explained that if you continue to do 10% with each requested reduction, it will be compounded until you're holding back about \$180,000.

Mr. K. Dolan stated that the Board refers to the DPW Director for a recommendation and invited Mr. Gonsalves to explain his recommendation.

Mr. Gonsalves explained that throughout his career, he has always held back a minimum standard of 10%. Mr. Gonsalves pointed out that Stoneham currently has a list of outstanding subdivisions that we no longer hold enough money to finish. Whatever the Board decides could carry over.

Mr. Rhuda stated that the 10% contingency is not listed in the subdivision rules and regulations. Mr. K. Dolan responded that as a matter of practice, the Board has always sought guidance from the DPW Director. Mr. K. Dolan knows that that the developer has a good reputation and there hasn't been a problem, but we need to build in protection. Mr. Moynihan asked why we would vary on this one. Why wouldn't we go by past practice whether it's in the regulations or not. Ms. Wengen asked for clarification. She asked, "Don't they get their money back?" and Mr. Gonsalves responded that they would get the money with the standard final release once the subdivision is built. Mr. T. Dolan asked if it was part of the Triparty agreement that Mr. Gonsalves would oversee. Mr. Houghton responded that the Triparty Agreement spelled out the total bond amount.

Mr. Moynihan made a motion to approve the bond release amount as recommended by Mr. Gonsalves in the amount of \$140,756.49. Mr. T. Dolan seconded the motion.

Mr. Vallarelli returned as Chair and moved on to the Glendale subdivision bond agenda item.

Mr. Houghton explained that his clients had just presented some figures to DPW for the recently approved Glendale Road Subdivision bond. They still had to obtain a true blasting amount. Mr. Gonsalves explained that a construction estimate was submitted without an amount added for blasting. Mr. Gonsalves stated that he usually sees an itemized breakdown. When asked, they gave a dollar figure of \$125,000 which Mr. Gonsalves thought was a little lean. There is a lot of ledge up there and he stated he would like to see more of an itemized break down.

Mr. K. Dolan asked if they would be chipping or blasting. The response was blasting.

Mr. Houghton told the Board that he would get a number. Mr. Gonsalves is hesitant to give a bond amount and would like to hold off. Mr. Houghton agreed and said that they can get the contractor to walk the site with Mr. Gonsalves. Mr. Gonsalves appreciated that as he doesn't want a bond amount that's lower than it should be. It would help to see something more substantial before a recommendation is made.

Ms. Wengen asked if this can happen for the July meeting. Mr. Houghton stated that was enough time. The Board agreed to place it on the July agenda.

Mr. Vallarelli stated that he'd have a letter prepared to send to the developers of the outstanding subdivisions by the next meeting as well.

Mr. Vallarelli introduced the next agenda item for 21 Tremont Street. Mr. Houghton asked the Board to endorse an Approval Not Required (ANR) plan for 21 Tremont Street. He explained that he had recently been granted a variance by the Board of Appeals to build two townhouses at 21 Tremont Street. The appeal period is up tomorrow. A small house built on the side of the lot in the 1800s will be torn down and two townhouses built in its place. The lot is split into two parcels. This plan combines the two parcels. The Board takes a few moments to sign the plan for filing. Ms. Wengen chooses not to sign as she lives nearby.

Mr. K. Dolan made a motion to move the last agenda item for 134 Elm Street up in order. The motion was seconded by Mr. T. Dolan. All members voted in favor 5-0.

Attorney Houghton wanted to revisit a conversation about 134 Elm Street that had started last year. His client John Cullen was looking to purchase 134 Elm Street to build 12 townhouses geared toward seniors. They have been trying to make it work financially with the inclusionary bylaw requiring two affordable units. Mr. Houghton wanted to check with the Board to see how amenable they would be to allowing Mr. Cullen to buyout one of the required affordable units. After speaking with the Assessor, the amount

would be around \$140,000 and would require Special Permit approval. Ideally they'd like to buyout both affordable units but would do 1 and 1 if that was the Board's preference.

Mr. K. Dolan stated that the easier thing to do would be to build twelve apartments. He appreciated that he is still looking to build townhomes. We encourage more housing for sale but we have the bylaw in place, so we'd want to get at least one affordable unit.

Mr. Vallarelli asked if the Board allowed two affordable units to be bought out that the Municipal Trust would get \$280,000 going in. Mr. Houghton stated that the bylaw designates that is where the money would go for payment as fee in lieu of. Mr. Houghton read section 6.25 (c) out loud. Mr. K. Dolan then mentioned subsection (b). Mr. Cullen would be required to provide 2 units as we round up on 1.44. It seems fair with the roundup that we might allow him to pay for 1 affordable unit.

Mr. Houghton commented that it is a good thing that the Special Permit for fee in lieu of language is in there since the interest rates aren't coming down.

Ms. Wengen just wanted to be clear that this money would go into the Municipal Housing Trust. Mr. Houghton responded that the bylaw determines that whereas the money from 62 High Street was part of litigation. That was at the Town Administrator's discretion and went to the general fund even though there was a conversation at a previous Planning Board meeting about a donation to the trust.

Mr. Vallarelli moved on to Rockville Park Special Permit. At 7:38, Mr. K. Dolan and Mr. Moynihan exited the meeting as they had previously recused themselves on the matter of Rockville Park. Mr. Perry would step in to sit on the Special Permit.

Mr. Houghton appeared before the Board on behalf of Sanco Builders. Mr. Houghton explained that he and his client Mike Santullo heard what the Board had said about preferring ownership. They believe that they can make condos work but would have to possibly do a buyout for some of the affordable units. It would be hard to sell six units at an affordable rate. It would be helpful if they were able to get a Special Permit to pay a fee in lieu of some of the six units.

Mr. Houghton reminded the Board that in 2019 he had gone before Town Meeting to rezone to Residence B. Since then, his client has purchased the Robinson and Sinclair houses in order to bring the site down and lowering the grade about seven feet. Those parcels were then rezoned to Residence B as well. With the whole area rezoned, the subdivision was redesigned. They are now proposing 46 garden style units in one single building with parking under. This will be an improvement but at a lot of cost. They need to change the way the sewer comes in. With this change 6 & 10 Glendale will be able to pick up the sewer if so desired. Rockville will pay the cost for this but it will help the Glendale Road subdivision that was approved a few months ago.

Mr. Houghton continued to talk about the amount of site work needed for this process. To make this work financially, his client wanted to do rentals. In going with condos, he would look for some buyout relief. Selling each unit at the affordable price would be about a \$300,000 loss per unit. The fee in lieu of might make it a bit less risky. They already know rentals will work with the affordable component.

Mr. Perry asked if they could fit 55 units. Mr. Houghton stated that 55 is allowed under the bylaw. Mr. Perry then asked if the sale price is restricted. Mr. Houghton responded that the State Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities calculates the sale price for the six affordable units. So it is restricted in that sense.

Mr. Vallarelli mentioned that at the last meeting the Board requested an updated traffic study. He wanted to hear the findings. Walt Woo of Stantec Consulting was present to explain the findings. Stantec had worked on the original traffic study in 2019. They collected new traffic data including updated traffic counts. They create a baseline which shows the existing condition. They compare that to a future with no build and with the building of the proposed units at both Rockville Park and the recently approved Glendale Road subdivision and any other projects we know exist in the area.

Mr. Woo concluded that the traffic counts had not changed much since 2019 and were roughly the same. He also concluded that there was not much difference in the estimated number of trips with Rockville and Glendale looking at a no build as opposed to building the proposed units. They use an ITE trip generation manual and standard procedure to come up with the calculations and interpretation of the data.

Mr. Vallarelli is curious about the uniqueness of the development. Every car coming out has to take a right. Where are those cars going? What is the impact of the right turn only?

Mr. Perry questions the report listing zero accidents at the intersection of Orchard and North Border Road. Mr. Woo responded that they gather information from the MassDOT crash database which validates up until 2021 right now. Mr. T. Dolan stated that he has seen accidents.

Mr. Vallarelli asked how many units were originally proposed. Mr. Houghton responded that the original approval was for sixteen units. Mr. Houghton added that this traffic study showed that the level of service stays the same through 2034.

Mr. Vallarelli opened the hearing to the public. Judy Schurgin of 224 Park Street stated that she tried to get crash numbers from the local police and was told that was State road. She then contacted the State Police barracks and they told her that this was a high accident area. She talked about how traffic backs up from the Friendly's to Rte 93. Her husband passed out photos showing cars backed up.

Mr. Santullo commented that although there are accidents in the area, there have been no accidents at the intersection of Orchard Street and North Border which is where the traffic study was looking.

Dan Votipka of 10 Glendale Road spoke about almost being hit taking a left hand turn into the property. He asked if there was any way to put no parking signs to keep the site line safer. The Board indicated that this is a State Road so the Town has no jurisdiction for that.

Mr. Houghton reiterated the importance of the traffic study showing the level of service remains unchanged. It is what it is here regardless of this proposed development. He reminded the Board that DCR approved the roadway improvements and required the right hand turn only. Mr. Houghton goes through some of the road improvements that would need to be made. Orchard Street is currently 18 feet wide and it would be widened to 28 feet. He again stated that North Border is heavily traveled but the numbers haven't changed from five years ago. Does that mean this site should not be developed? Mr. Houghton doesn't believe so. He described the existing area to be like little Appalachia. This development would be a remarkable improvement to the area, not to mention increased income to the Town. It provides housing that is much needed even if it isn't the best location in town. Mr. Houghton continued to mention that these would be all one and two bedroom units.

Mr. Houghton stated that he presented a zoning article to the Board last April. He then read from the April 2023 meeting minutes. The Board had voted unanimously 4-0 to rezone to Residence B and were told that the number of units would be increasing. The Board gave no indication that they had a problem with the increased number of units. He reminded the Board that his client has spent a lot of time and effort on this. He shouldn't be held responsible for people who choose to cut through Stoneham to get to the highway.

Mr. Perry asked if the dialogue should change with the change from apartments to condos? Mr. Houghton stated it is a Special Permit for 46 units. The bylaw doesn't differentiate rentals or condos. It doesn't matter. Mr. Perry also asked if the engineering would change. Mr. Gonsalves stated that there are two different projects up there. Rockville would be relocating the sewer line which in turn would benefit the subdivision approved at Glendale Road.

Mr. Houghton explained that this would also need Site Plan approval and Conservation Commission again. He again mentioned that this would now be condos.

Ms. Wengen asked if the Board would vote tonight on this as 46 units with 6 affordable. Mr. Houghton stated that would be the plan. The six affordable units are required under the inclusionary bylaw. They would come back for a separate Special Permit if they sought to pay a fee in lieu of for any of the affordable.

Mr. Vallarelli asked the Board if they would be ready to vote. Mr. T. Dolan stated that he would like to have time to digest what they have heard. He asked that it be continued.

Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to continue the Special Permit for Rockville until July 10th at 7PM. Mr. Perry seconded the motion. All members voted in favor 4-0.

Mr. T. Dolan then made a motion to continue the subdivision for Rockville Park. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wengen. All members present voted in favor 3-0. Mr. Perry did not sit on the subdivision as the Associate member can only sit on Special Permits.

Mr. T. Dolan made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Wengen seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20PM.

Respectfully Submitted:

Maria Sagarino
Town Clerk

Documents and other exhibits used by the Planning Board during this meeting to be made part of the official record but not attached to these minutes:

Isola Lane bond reduction memo from DPW Director Brett Gonsalves

ANR Plan for 21 Tremont Street

A plan dated March 25, 2024 by Dragani Engineering Group LLC entitled "Rockville Park Stoneham MA" shows the proposed building of 46 units

A pan by Edward J. Farrell, P.L.S., entitled "Definitive Subdivision Plan of Rockville Park, Stoneham, MA," dated April 19, 2024

Traffic Study of Rockville Park/Glendale Road by Stantec Consulting dated June 5, 2024.

Three photos presented by the David and Judy Schurgin of 224 Park Street showing traffic backup.