

Board of Appeals Meeting- Thursday- January 16, 2025

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The Board of Appeals meeting on January 16, 2025, discussed:

2024-014 19 Walden Street: The meeting was held on January 16, 2025, and the agenda included one main matter: case number 2024-014-19 Walden Street. The case is a continuation from an October 24, 2024, hearing, with members Darren Baird, Mark Chapdelaine, Tom Chiudina, Jason Wright, John Young, and Jordan Senerth present. A request for continuation is mentioned, and the meeting proceeded with the main agenda item.

Attorney David Stasio introduced himself as the local counsel for the applicant and mentioned his team members. The plans submitted in June 2024 were reviewed, and changes were made based on neighborhood concerns, reducing the number of units from ten to eight. The new plans included eleven parking spaces for the eight units, requiring a variance for five additional parking spaces. The plans are conceptual designs and do not include final renditions, trash plans, parking plans, or landscape engineering plans.

The applicant proposed reducing the number of units from ten to eight, with eleven parking spaces, seeking a variance for five additional spots. Concerns were raised about the small unit sizes (572 sq. ft.) and the impact on parking. The Board suggested closing a curb cut to create more on-street parking and making the sixth spot handicap accessible. The applicant agreed to provide revised plans, including detailed parking and exterior designs, for the February meeting. The Board of Appeals discussed the placement of a utility pole in relation to a proposed curb cut, expressing concern about potential changes to the site plan. They emphasized the need for detailed engineering plans, including parking, trash, design, and landscaping. The board requested a continuation to February 27, 2025, to review revised plans.

Action Items for 19 Walden Street:

Provide revised plans showing the parking layout with one handicap spot, the building exterior design, and other details.

Submit plans for review of utility locations and any necessary relocations.

Provide a detailed trash/recycling plan.

Attend the February 27th meeting to present the updated plans.

The floor was open for public comments, noting no one was present in the room or gallery.

The status of the retail side of the development is raised, and the Applicant explained the piecemeal development over nineteen years.

Concerns were raised about the size of the units and the impact on parking, suggesting a reduction in unit size to accommodate more parking spaces.

Discussion Points:

The utility pole being in the middle of the proposed curb cut, questioning how the development team missed this detail. The pole is in the middle of the curb cut and discusses potential solutions, such as moving the pole or the curb cut.

Past experiences with approved plans that differ from the final construction, emphasizing the need for accurate plans. The need for an engineered plan that shows how the parking and other elements will be accommodated, including potential relocations, was emphasized.

The inclusion of a trash plan in the next presentation was requested.

The plans required, including parking, design, aesthetics, landscaping, and engineering plans were discussed.

Ongoing discussions with the electric company about the placement of transformers and other mechanical units are occurring.

The Applicant prefers to know what the Board does not want rather than what they do want, to avoid bias.

Concerns were raised about the visibility of parking spaces and the potential for transitory conflicts.

A gate could help manage these conflicts, although it may not be popular with some neighbors was suggested.

Final Comments and Conditional Approval:

A straw poll was suggested to gauge the Board's inclination to grant the variance, noting the need for more detailed plans. The Applicant agreed to provide more detailed plans and seek conditional approval from the board.

It was recommended to continue the matter until February 27, 2025, meeting to allow time for the developer to prepare the necessary plans. The Board agreed to continue the matter with a waiver of the statutory period for a decision.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

The Board moved to accept the minutes from December 19, 2024, regular meeting. The motion is approved by all members presents.

Continuation Request for 63-69 Putnam Street:

A request was read dated January 14, 2025, to continue the discussion for 63-69 Putnam Street due to ongoing design revisions. The board agreed to continue the matter until the February 27, 2025, meeting, waiving the statutory period.

Adjournment: A motion to continue the matter was made and the motion was approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.