



TOWN OF WINTHROP PLANNING BOARD
1 Metcalf Square, Winthrop, MA 02152
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MEETING MINUTES- FEBRUARY 24, 2025

ATTENDANCE

Chris Boyce-Chair-Present
Honor Merceret-Present
Sarah Jane Fourness-Present
Alyssa Gamble-Present
Jason Pollutro-Present

PROPERTIES DISCUSSED:

67 Woodside Avenue:

The Planning Board discussed the redevelopment of this property, as a pre-application review, focusing on parking, easements, and architectural details. The project involves converting a building into four residential units and ground floor commercial space, with three parking spaces provided.

Concerns included the height variance to thirty-five feet, the placement of dumpsters, and the installation of CCTV cameras.

The Board emphasized the need for detailed landscaping, bike parking, and proper fencing. They also requested additional views and materials boards to address aesthetic concerns.

214-226 Winthrop Street:

This project was approved with conditions. The conditions include:

- A fence (approved by neighbor, Elaine Stimson), bollards every 6', lighting/ flood light improvement, bikes, and arbor vitae plantings/ screening.

Public Comments:

- Concerns about the fence level and the potential for cars to roll down the hill into an abutter's yard were raised.
- The fence should be extended, and the lighting should be adjusted to avoid overshadowing.
- It was suggested to add bollads every six feet on the back fence.
- Maximizing bike parking and requests for more dense planting to screen light from the parking lot were made.

50 Somerset Avenue:

- The project will proceed with conditions to ensure compliance with zoning regulations and community feedback. Provide a material board showing the proposed colors and textures.
- Review the parking calculation and confirm the number of spaces required versus provided.
- Obtain confirmation from the Town Council on the air rights agreement for the building overhang.
- Provide additional views and renderings to better illustrate the building's appearance, especially at the corner.
- Explore opportunities to add more visual interest and articulation to the ground floor facade.
- Evaluate the potential to incorporate more landscaping and greenery, especially along the rear property line.
- Zoning – Clarify the overhang at the sidewalk.
- Clarify variance and where it applies.
- "Air rights" – Clarify if this is interpreted as being applied to all sides of building, or just where the hardship was established.
- Height variance 47' and rear setback was approved by ZBA.
- Bollard screening required from street at transformer.
- It is not acceptable to achieve residential parking via stackers.
- The ground floor is primarily parking and mechanical space rather than commercial space as planned.
- Work is needed to improve pedestrian experience.
- Include lighting improvements and sidewalk elements that will impede walking path/visibility
- The windows near the parking area could include slats, planters or other elements to improve public realm experience.
- Greenery at decks could help with noise concerns.

There was a vote to Continue.

7 Madison Avenue:

This project was approved with conditions. The conditions include:

- The Open space in right of way is developed as designed.
- Fencing installed as designed.
- Approval is for what is shown in the drawings.

Short Term Rental Ordinance Review:

The Board reviewed the Proposed Short-Term Ordinance drafted by Attorney Cipoletta on August 20, 2024.

The Planning Board discussed the short-term rental ordinance, focusing on definitions, variance requests, and the impact on Winthrop's housing stock. They debated aligning the 14-day local limit with the state's 31-day definition of short-term rentals. The conversation touched on the confusion caused by different definitions of short-term rentals and the need for alignment with state standards. The conversation included a discussion on the state's definition of transient as 30 days or less and the need for alignment with building codes. The board also requested the definition of "family apartment." This ordinance would supersede the current B&B ordinance.

It was suggested that Winthrop's midterm rentals should be defined as 14 to 31 days, with anything over 31 days considered long-term.

The discussion included the impact of short-term rentals on the town's housing stock and the need for a clear definition to avoid confusion. This may include that short-term rentals should be owner-occupied and that variances should not be allowed.

The board emphasized the need for clear, non-variance-allowing regulations and annual inspections, suggesting third-party management. They highlighted the importance of a public list of short-term rentals to ensure fairness and transparency. Economic impacts, including sales tax and the feasibility of managing properties, were also considered, with a call for a comprehensive economic impact study. The Board questioned if 1.5% makes sense, if there is a public list, and the current estimate. The Board discussed the economic impact of short-term rentals, including the 6% sales tax and the \$300 annual fee per property and the potential benefits for local businesses.

The current renewal period of every two years and the need for annual inspections was discussed and the possibility of hiring an agency to manage short-term rental registrations and inspections was raised. A discussion was held on the sustainability of the limit and the need for accurate data on the current number of short-term rentals.

The importance of parking requirements for short-term rentals, noting that properties should already have parking spaces, was discussed. This conversation included the idea that parking should be a non-negotiable requirement for short-term rentals, the need for clear eligibility criteria, and the possibility that properties should not be eligible for short-term rentals if they lack adequate parking.

Meeting Minutes Continued to [March 24, 2025](#)

- Approval of December 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes.
- Approval of January 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes.