

Minutes of the Meeting of
June 22, 1987

Members Present: Mr. Thomas W. Falwell, Chairman
Mrs. Doris M. Cremens, Vice Chairman
Mr. Philip J. McCarthy
Mr. Edward T.M. Tsoi
Mr. Barry Faulkner

In Addition: Alan McClennen, Jr., Secretary Ex-Officio;
Mr. Daniel Xenos, member of the Central Street
Historic District Commission, and Joanne
Bissetta from the Arlington Advocate.

7:30 p.m. The Redevelopment Board convened a meeting on the
petition of Time Land and Building, Inc. to return to
the Special Permit Granting Authority in less than
two years.

Mr. Richard Keshian, a local attorney representing the owner of Time Land and Building, Inc., and Mr. Robert Cala, an architect with Project Planners, Inc., representing the petitioner, met with the Board. They presented materials indicating how the new plans for the project would be implemented. They noted in their presentation, that they felt the revised plan represented a significant departure from the earlier plans, particularly when related to Environmental Design Review Conditions 2, 3, 4, 8, and 10. In the matter of EDR Condition 2, relating to the relationship of the building to the environment, the petitioner felt that the project now represented a uniform condition throughout; and, therefore, was more compatible with the surrounding land uses. This change had been accomplished by altering the shape of the building as well as the facade, the landscaping, and other visual elements. Mr. Faulkner and Mr. McCarthy both concurred with the petitioners representations. Mr. Faulkner noted that the earlier concerns expressed about the adverse impact of the earlier design on Bacon Street, appeared to have been mitigated in this revised plan. Regarding EDR Condition 3, which related to open space, Mr. Keshian indicated that the plan now contained 4,000 square feet of landscaping. In regard to EDR Condition 4, relating to circulation, Mr. Keshian noted that the revised plans removed the access and egress point on Bacon Street, with the result that the only entrance and exit to the lower level of the garage will be off Mill Street. In regard to EDR Condition 8, relating to special features, Mr. Keshian, noted that, once again, there was a unification of the buildings on the site. Finally, in regard to EDR Condition 10, which deals with heritage, the petitioners indicated that they had met with representatives of Mill Brook Square, and they had also met with several historical groups, and there was a general agreement that the revised plans represented a more historically compatible solution.

Motion: Moved by Mr. McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Tsoi, to grant the request of the petitioner under the provisions of Chapter 40A, Section 16, and allow the petitioner to refile for a Special Permit, based on the fact that the revised project plans represented significant and material changes to the earlier plans. Unanimous vote in favor.

8:00 p.m. Director's Report

1. Mr. McClennen presented the revised lease for Northeastern Family Institute. The Board requested that the lease be reviewed for acceptability by Mr. Falwell.

2. Cambridge Family and Children's Services notified the Board of its intension to extend their lease at Suite 203, 20 Academy Street. The Board noted receipt of notification that the tenant intended to extend the lease for an additional 18 months.

8:15 p.m. Representatives of the Mirak family met with the Board to review progress on designs for the Arlington Center project.

Mr. Robert Mirak, a member of the Mirak family, and Ms. Marla Curtis, architect with The Architectural Team, were present to brief the Board. Mr. Mirak and Ms. Curtis indicated that since they met with the Board earlier, they have done considerable engineering work; they have completed traffic studies; and they have done detailed subsurface investigations. All studies have shown that the project is capable of being built. They have encountered problems, but not problems that are insurmountable to resolve. As far as planning is concerned, they have expanded the retail floor space to approximately 25,000 square feet. This was done in response to the Board's earlier request. Finally, they have incorporated the recent Town Meeting Amendments under Article 16 of the Special Town Meeting, in order to deal with the issues of height.

Mr. Mirak indicated that, to date, they have spent approximately \$125,000 on design and engineering fees. The project has become exceedingly complex, and they have spent the last two months in an intensive effort to resolve a number of problems relating to access and egress to the site. At the present time, they hope that they can be back with a formal filing for Environmental Design Review early in the Fall. This would allow them to go through the permitting process and start construction in the Spring. Mr. Mirak indicated that they had worked carefully with the various tenants on the site, and hopefully, all the relocation problems will be resolved.

Ms. Curtis reviewed the plans and models, and showed how the project had evolved from the earlier designs of March 1987. Most importantly, at the request of the Board, they have enlarged the retail component of the site. This has necessitated the provision

of additional service parking, which has created some problems with the adjoining properties on Massachusetts Avenue. However, they hope to begin dealing with Mr. Gechjian, the owner of New England Photo, and Dr. Kim, the owner of the Shattuck's building, in order to reach a mutual understanding of how all three properties could be improved through this project.

The Board then discussed its desire for the project to include a quality restaurant. Mr. Bob Mirak indicated that they are interested in obtaining quality retail tenants, including a restaurant. However, he has been advised that it is still too early to try to sign up a restaurant tenant. He also indicated that, as the plans have evolved, they are now planning between 170 and 190 dwelling units which would be marketed as condominiums. The Board requested information as to why they could not provide rental units. Mr. Mirak indicated that they had done extensive cash flow analysis, and an apartment complex on this site, with rental units, would result in eight years of negative cash flow, which he felt was unreasonable for his family's desire to develop the site. Mr. Falwell reiterated his desire for a quality restaurant on the site, and he indicated that he felt a restaurant would be an extremely successful amenity, both for the project and for the Town.

Mr. Tsoi indicated that he felt the project had "come a long way" from the early conceptual designs. He commended Mr. Mirak and Ms. Curtis for their efforts to try to accommodate the concerns expressed by Mr. Tsoi and Mr. McClennen at a number of meetings. He urged them to continue their preparations.

8:45 p.m. Director's Report (continued)

3. Mr. McClennen provided a brief status report on progress at 366 Massachusetts Avenue. He indicated that one of the reasons for the delay was a design fault in the plans relating the hydraulic elevator pad to the location of the building. He had been informed by Mr. Doyle that work should begin in earnest in early July.

4. Mr. McClennen indicated that the Department had surveyed surrounding Towns concerning fees for rentals and school buildings. This research will necessitate additional work before he is ready to return to the Redevelopment Board with a definitive proposal for new base rents at Parmenter School.

9:00 p.m. Representatives of Rose-Mal Heritage Realty Trust appeared before the Board to review plans for The Rembrandt. Mr. John Blackburn, Mr. Lou DiNapoli, Mr. Paul Maloy, Mr. Gary Larsen, Mr. Thomas Leib, and Mr. Joseph Steinkrauss were present to make the presentation.

Mr. Steinkrauss opened by indicating that there was a slight defect in the Special Permit. The Permit was granted to Rose-Mal

Realty Trust when in fact, it should have been granted to Rose-Mal Heritage Realty Trust. After some discussion, the Redevelopment Board indicated that it will acknowledge the change in ownership in the minutes of this meeting and will file the amended decision as soon as possible to correct this deficiency. This apparently was overlooked by counsel to the petitioner when he reviewed the draft decision prior to its execution by the Board.

Mr. Thomas Leib, project architect, reviewed the status of work by showing a model of the project, and elevations of the building. Mr. Leib discussed the scale of the project, how the building meets the ground, what the frontage will look like, and particularly, how the entrance from Massachusetts Avenue will work. He indicated that it was advantageous to keep the building set back from Massachusetts Avenue. All but 5 dwelling units in the building face the side or the back yard. In his opinion, the entrance is a focal point of the building, and he intends to enhance this entrance by using planting materials and other techniques. The Board then reviewed additional design details. Mr. Leib examined a number of changes. Mr. Tsoi indicated that he was concerned about a one and a half story entrance at the Massachusetts end of the building. He felt that the proposed entrance at the front needed considerably more work. He did not feel that the current approach to the building, including the landscaping is effective. For example, the principal entrance of the building is now set up to face a blank retaining wall. He is concerned that it may not have proper access for the handicapped. He indicated that he could see that the architect had worked diligently preparing and evaluating the numerous alternatives. Unfortunately, the project architect's mind seems to be fixed on the entrance as it is presently configured. The techniques to enhance the entrance are improving it; however, the work has yet to provide a satisfactory solution for the front of the building.

Mr. Steinkrauss noted for the Board that there was a tremendous diversity of buildings along Massachusetts Avenue and clearly no standard for the future of Massachusetts Avenue because it is too difficult to predict what may happen. Mr. Steinkrauss indicated that he would love to see additional work on Massachusetts Avenue and its buildings; however, currently there is no standard to strive for on Massachusetts Avenue.

Mrs. Cremens indicated that the floors, without windows, at this end severely detract from the front of the building. She feels that the Redevelopment Board is very consistent in asking for alternatives for the entrance.

There was then a brief discussion concerning the Linear Park, and Mr. Gary Larsen, landscape architect for the project, reviewed the current thinking on open space at the site. He also noted that there were plans to extend the Linear Park along the embankment immediately to the rear of the project. Finally, after some other general discussion, it was moved as follows:

Motion: Moved by Mr. McCarthy, seconded by Mrs. Cremens, that the Board approve design development drawings for The Rembrandt. Unanimous vote in favor, with one abstention.

10:30 p.m. Adjournment

Motion: Moved by Mr. Tsoi, seconded by Mrs. Cremens, to adjourn. Unanimous vote in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan McClennen, Jr.
Secretary Ex-Officio

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