

## **PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**

**July 25, 2023**

**Board Members Present:** Margaret Olson (Chair), Craig Nicholson, Gary Taylor, Ephraim Flint

**Staff Present:** Paula Vaughn-Mackenzie, Jennifer Curtin

**Attendees:** Andrew Glass, Dana Robbat

MO called the meeting to order.

MO moved to approve the minutes of June 27 and July 11 as amended.. CN seconded. Roll Call: CN aye, EF aye, GT aye, MO aye

### **7:10 PM Housing Choice Act Discussion with representatives from FOMA and Historical Commission**

PVM said that Joel Bard would be joining the working session on Friday. PVM said that Lincoln couldn't exactly do what Lexington did, which was include a commercial subdistrict in their HCA district. PVM said that we may not want to model our district after Lexington, since they may get into an issue with approval due to their zoning including their commercial area. She added that a way to avoid this would be to put the commercial area in a separate district. GT asked PVM if Town Counsel thinks a 50% vote would apply. PVM replied that Mr. Bard thinks it will but will confirm. She added that we have reached out to EOHLIC about this approach, and are currently waiting on a response.

Dana Robbat gave a slideshow presentation which detailed the history of modern architecture in Lincoln from 1930-1970, outlined the Philosophy of Modern Architecture and its connection to the Town, and emphasized the importance of using this history and philosophy as a guide for the future development.

Andrew Glass detailed five guiding principles that he and Mrs. Robbat thought to be useful to the Planning Board in their formulation of the design guidelines for the HCA districts. He stated that, while these principles were reflected in the current draft guidelines, they could be emphasized more. The first guiding principle mentioned by Mr. Glass was thinking about simple massing in the building form. Mr. Glass also stated that simple roof lines would have the benefit of allowing for a greater amount of solar panels to be installed. MO asked if Mr. Glass was advocating against dormers, or whether he was just advocating against complex roof design Mr. Glass responded that he was not advocating against any particular design, but instead that the guidelines should encourage simple massing. GT asked what mechanisms the Planning Board has at its disposal that would avoid seeming prescriptive. MO said that encouraging minimalist aesthetics are unlikely to be seen as imposing costs, but noted that modern architecture is not universally supported in Lincoln. She suggested including iconic Lincoln buildings of

both colonial and modern architecture in the guidelines as examples. MO noted that the Town cannot dictate the architecture or architect of new buildings resulting from the HCA, and that the Board should draft zoning regulations. MO said that new developers would likely try to get through the process as quickly and as cheaply as possible, so they would likely comply with the guidelines as long as they are not extreme.

Mr. Glass said that the other guiding principles could be the use of windows to connect the indoors to the outdoors, well-designed open spaces, the creation of walkable paths and connections through the station area, and the use of ordinary materials in creative ways.

MO mentioned that the Planning board also must consider environmental impact, and that a box shape is the most efficient architectural New England style as opposed to lower building spread discussed by some modern architects. Mr. Glass said that there is a lot of synergy between sustainability and simple design principles, and gave the increased capacity for solar panels on simple rooflines as an example.

GT inquired about an article sent out that was about a development that was built on a pyramid shaped parking structure. Mrs. Robbat said that she found the article to be an example of innovation in terms of parking structure, and that she liked the idea of having residents be able to go directly to their floor as opposed to a lobby, making the parking structure an asset as opposed to a deficit. Mr. Glass added that the article demonstrated how constraints can be turned into assets, and said that it is that sort of creativity and innovation that Town leadership should try to encourage from developers. Mr. Glass suggested the possibility of taller buildings with cascading apartments to take advantage of the amazing views in Lincoln. GT said that if one side was cascading, the other side would have to be a tall wall, but also said it was an interesting idea. EF said that he found what the paper was describing to be very interesting, and that the Town should encourage and be receptive to developers who are looking to do something different, but questioned whether the Town would get developers that were looking to do so.

Mrs. Robbat asked if there was a way to get around the HCA requirement of building by right. CN asked if the zoning would be done by Town Meeting. PVM answered that the zoning would be written by the Planning Board and that a way to get around the lack of control over new developments in the HCA district could be through incentives. MO said they could get a reasonable amount of control through a Special Permit process.

Mrs. Robbat recommended reaching out to Brooks Mostue because of his experience in housing, love for Lincoln, and practicality. Mr. Glass added that Mr. Mostue is not prescriptive and that he is success oriented.

PVM said that the principles that Mr. Glass's described could be easily worked into the design guidelines, that some are already in there, and that the guidelines should be tweaked to emphasize those principles.

GT said that he often sees kids walking to the mall after school and suggested that there should be a nice open space for them and others to congregate. CN noted that the newly created street frontage might be concealed in the back, and inquired if there are any examples of high-density modernist developments with successful courtyards. Mrs. Robbat said that people should be able to see open spaces and people

occupying them, using the example of a piazza where children can play and people are sitting out and can have spontaneous meetings. Mr. Glass recommended that minimal setbacks remain a general proposition and that certain allowances be made for things such as outdoor seating. He used the example of the commercial street in Provincetown which he said allows for the developer to use the space between the street and the building in creative ways while simultaneously having minimal setbacks. PVM agreed, saying large setbacks aren't strictly necessary for a great public space.

CN asked if there would be an opportunity soon to plan out the sidewalks in relevant areas, or have consultants provide input. MO mentioned that BPAC has been looking into it but have come across the issue that setbacks are from the property line so it would have to be determined how far the property lines are from the road. She noted that the distance of the property lines from the roads is not included in the GIS system. She added that getting that information is expensive which is likely why the Town has not done it. EF mentioned that back in the 40s the Town took information on bounds, and wondered if that information still existed. MO said that the information still existed in paper but not in the GIS. PVM said that they are not going to plan the Town center before people build, and that it will cost money to get information from the DPW and put it into the GIS. PVM said that they are talking to John Vancor as a consulting engineer to get some of that information.

MO moved to adjourn. GT seconded. Roll Call: CN aye, EF aye, MO aye, GT aye

Approved on August 8, 2023.