

rezoned to MU3), BU5 (to be rezoned to MU3) Ref: Sec. 7.3.3, 4.2, 4.4.1, 7.3.5, 4.2.2.B.1, 4.2.3, 5.4.2.B, 5.1.4, 5.1.13, 5.1.8.B.1, 5.1.8.B.2, 5.1.8.B.4, 5.1.8.B.6, 5.1.8.D.2, 5.1.9.B, 5.1.10.A.1, 5.1.10.B.3, 5.1.10.B.5, 5.1.12, 5.2, 5.2.13 of the City of Newton Rev Zoning Ord, 2017.

Action: **Land Use Held 7-0 (Councilor Downs Not Voting); Public Hearing Continued**

Note: Chair Kelley introduced items #238-25 and 239-25. Additional back-up can be found at the following link:

#238-25 – <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/885679>

#239-25 - <https://newtonma.viewpointcloud.com/records/885288>

Stephen Buchbinder, Schlesinger and Buchbinder LLP, attorney for the petitioner, noted there have been several iterations of this project including the most recent proposal with significantly more office space in 2021. Attorney Buchbinder explained the new project is smaller and consists of primarily six residential buildings with attached, multi-level garages and about 20,000 square feet of ancillary retail space. He shared Mark Development and their team have been working with the neighborhood liaison group and the Ward 4 councilors.

Robert Korff, principal at Mark Development, noted the project has been downsized from 11.7 acres to 9.34 acres and the MBTA is now maintaining the eastern portion of the parking lot. Mr. Korff explained some of the changes to the project and highlighted that 45% of the units will be two- or three-bedroom units.

Rob Adams, Halverson Design Partnership, reviewed circulation to the site and pedestrian circulation to the site and around the site. Mr. Adams noted the proposed vehicular circulation introduces two roundabouts, maintains Grove Street in its two-way existence, improves the on-ramp to a two-way road that runs east-west from the roundabout to Main Street and connects to the off-ramp of I-95. He mentioned this will provide a new pedestrian link to the west which will connect to Riverside Park. Mr. Adams also highlighted various proposed improvements to sidewalk and bicycle infrastructure.

Randy Hart, VHB, noted they had prepared a detailed traffic impact and access study that was submitted in July. Mr. Hart mentioned that with the proposed changes to the project, the traffic impact will decrease.

Mr. Adams noted the percentages for open space for the proposed project exceeded the percentages from the prior approved project. He shared updates to the central green space with new retail and civic space on the ground level to help activate it. He noted that Grove Street will remain its existing width, but they will provide a treeway along the back of the curb, a protected cycle track, a small buffer, and then a pedestrian corridor. Mr. Adams mentioned there is a proposed play space and a pocket park.

Michael Lawson, Minno Wasko, presented architectural plans for the project.

Mr. Adams shared some recent updates to the project based on feedback from the community, peer reviewers and the City. Some of these updates include extending the pedestrian connection to Riverside Park and a DCR trail network, design modification to the central green space to incorporate peer review comments about building massing and solar gain, introducing the community space of about 2,000 square feet and adding public art.

Deputy Chief Planner Cat Kemmett shared the attached presentation and gave a brief project overview. She noted the petitioners are seeking multiple forms of zoning relief including dimensional, parking, and site relief. She also noted the text amendments required for the rezoning petition. Ms. Kemmett shared that the City's peer reviewers would provide comments during the meeting. Consultants from Camoin were unable to attend but provided their comments on the fiscal impact review in memo form. They found the methodology and estimates used by the petitioner to be reasonable and projected annual net revenue to the City at approximately \$1,034,147.

Corinne Tobias and Sergio Musto, Green International Affiliates, Inc. and peer reviewers for Transportation, noted that the number of weekday daily vehicle trips and vehicle trips per peak hour will be reduced due to the reduction in size of the project. They requested further review of traffic calming on main roadway through development, on-site fire apparatus movements to ensure the City's fire apparatuses can maneuver safely around the site, and Saturday mid-day traffic volumes to prepare for high transit use on those days. Mr. Musto noted they also requested a complete bicycle connection to the train station and a mid-block pedestrian crossing on Grove Street. They asked for confirmation on various parking-related plans including delivery and ride share spaces, parking layout and bicycle parking in the proposed garage, and that the proposal is one space per residential unit.

Alan Mountjoy, NBBJ and peer reviewer for Urban Design, noted the development team had already made some changes based on his comments. He expressed support for the transit and pedestrian proposed improvements. Mr. Mountjoy noted there is a tight spot for pedestrian/bicycle travel on Grove Street under the MBTA bridge. He mentioned that the proposed open spaces will be hard to see from Grove Street so connections from the street to the open space will be important. He noted concerns around the building massing of Buildings 1 and 2 and proposed some interim improvements be made to screen the MBTA parking lot.

Janet Carter Bernardo, Horsley Witten Group and peer reviewer for Stormwater, recommended a few additional stormwater details be provided, clarification of soil testing, and clarification of the percentage of total suspended solid removal provided by the catch basins with water quality inserts. She also asked for clarification on how the garage roof runoff will be managed, whether cars will be parked on the roof, and snow removal. Ms. Carter Bernardo recommended that a separate Erosion Control Plan be provided to be included in the contractor's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. She asked for confirmation that the 60-inch existing culvert that

crosses through the property has been videoed and has capacity. She noted the proposed wastewater estimated to be generated and the water demand has been reduced.

The public hearing was opened.

Ted Chapman, 91 Cornell Street, expressed support for the improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. Mr. Chapman asked for clarification on where the separated bicycle path would end.

Marcia Johnson, 845 Washington Street, expressed support for the project.

Keilly Cutler, 9 Asheville Road, expressed support for the project.

David Depew, 268 Grove Street, asked for clarification that this project would be apartments not condos and suggested the developers work with the Metro West Regional Transit Authority to coordinate a bus stop at the development.

Scott Neagle, 9 Asheville Road, expressed support for the project.

Fredrik Tingdal, 245 Grove Street, expressed concerns over the density of the project and traffic concerns.

MaryLee Belleville, 136 Warren Street, expressed support for the changes to the project to include more residential units. She expressed concerns about current parking availability at the Riverside station.

Tom Gagen, 32 Fern Street, expressed support for the project. He noted the children that would live in this development would go to the Williams School which has been under enrolled recently.

Ewen Cameron, 248 Grove Street, expressed support for the reduction in project size and the proposed roundabouts as a traffic calming measure on Grove Street. He noted concerns that the front face of the building on Grove Street would appear huge from street level and asked if an exit option could be added for people trying to exit from Building 5/6 to the highway.

Cyrisse Jaffee, 8 Hallron Road, expressed support for the reduction in project size. She noted concerns about the building massing and what types of retail would be coming in.

Lynn Weissberg, 5 Alden Street, expressed support for the project and encouraged the Council to make a decision on the permit before the end of the term.

Sean Roche, 42 Daniel Street, expressed support for the project. He asked the developers to consider less parking, more retail and a community gym space.

Planning & Development Board Chair Kevin McCormick noted the P&D Board would be discussing this item at their meeting in October.

Planning & Development Board member Peter Doeringer asked if all the changes that are being proposed in the MU3 zone were necessary or if special permits could be used to accomplish the same goal for this project.

A councilor asked if the parking spaces would be a separate cost from the cost of the residential unit and what phosphorus reduction controls were proposed for the project. The same councilor asked about the timeline for project completion. Attorney Buchbinder confirmed that the parking would be decoupled, and construction would take four to five years. Robert Holworth, VHB, noted phosphorus reduction would occur through groundwater recharge chambers that would be included as part of the stormwater design.

A councilor encouraged discounted MBTA passes to be included in the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and asked if the development team had studied how long it would take for someone to walk from the far top corner apartment in Building 2-3 to the fourth or fifth story of the parking garage, then drive through the garage and exit the site. The same councilor asked why hotel or senior housing uses were not incorporated into the project. The same councilor noted this developer has proposed several other projects that have not ultimately been built and asked how this one was different. Attorney Buchbinder confirmed they would be filing a TDM and noted that in their conversations with the neighborhood, they expressed a desire to keep the project residential. He shared that they hope to get this project built if approved but the economic environment is challenging right now.

A councilor expressed concern about the building massing and asked how many school aged children would be living in the complex. The same councilor asked for more information on the plans to recruit businesses for the commercial space in the project. David Roach, with the development team, said they estimated 147 new school-aged children would live in the development, 70 of which would be elementary-aged. Mr. Korff noted that they would talk more about the commercial space at a later meeting but that bringing in a mixture of national and local businesses helps the financial viability of the project.

A councilor expressed support for the inclusion of a hotel component into the project and asked for more information on how parking would be managed on days where there are sports or other major events in Boston that would impact parking at the train station. The same councilor thanked the neighborhood liaison committee and Mark Development for their efforts to work with the neighborhood. Mr. Korff said they would address some of these concerns at a later meeting. He noted they had explored a hotel on the property, but it did seem financially feasible and they are under time constraints working with the MBTA.

A councilor asked for more information on the recreational facilities for kids year-round proposed within the project and whether a dog park could be included in the project. Rob Adams, Halverson

Design, noted the proposed play space is a relatively good-sized space and they are proposing connections to pre-existing spaces like Riverside Park. The same councilor asked for the play space to be designed for all children including those with disabilities. Mr. Halverson said their designs will be inclusive of people will all abilities.

A councilor encouraged the retail space on the central plaza to be businesses that will help to activate the plaza like a restaurant or coffee shop. The same councilor asked for more information on the proposed pocket parks and expressed concerns about the building massing.

Mr. Mountjoy asked for clarification on whether the children's play area would be for tenants only. Mr. Korff confirmed that it would be tenant only.

The public hearing was continued.

Councilor Block motioned to hold #238-25 and 239-25 which passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Kelley, Chair