

PLANNING BOARD PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
DEFINITIVE SITE PLAN for MASS AVE RENTALS, LLC
AUGUST 09, 2022 - 7:00 p.m.

Members present: Mark M. Schafron/*Chairman*, Robert Swartz/*Vice-Chairman*, Robert J. Bettez, Sr., Paul A. Cormier, Stephen Cormier-*Members*, and Trevor Beauregard/*Director-City Planner*.

Absent: *None.*

Also present: Rob Oliva-City Engineer, Gary Lorden-Mass Ave Rentals, Mitchell Lorden-Mass Ave Rentals, and Christine Martines Fucile-DCDP.

ANNOUNCEMENT - Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All Documents referenced or used during the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Director of Community Development & Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law. All documents shall become part of the official record of the meeting.

Mr. Schafron, Chairman called the Public Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Schafron read aloud the Public Meeting Notice for Mass Ave Rentals, LLC.

T. Beauregard informed by saying the City, the GRA (*Gardner Redevelopment Authority*), and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as well as Mass Ave Rentals, LLC have been working on this project for two to three years now. The GRA purchased this property a few years ago, and then requested RFP's (*Request For Proposals*) with no responses. Therefore, approached Mr. Lorden of Mass Ave Rentals, LLC to see if he was interested. At the time, it was very tight financially to take on a project like this without having any grant funds, or free money from the State because of a market rate housing development as opposed to an affordable housing development, so it took a few years to convince the State to develop a program for market rate housing in downtown areas. Mr. Lorden applied for the program with the City's assistance and received a substantial grant of \$900,000 to bring some equity into the project to make it work. Recently, Mass Ave Rentals, LLC purchased the property from the GRA and has been working diligently on the project. Further, Parcel A on 32 Parker Street which was part of the theater property was set aside for this project to allow parking for the residents of the Parker Street buildings.

Mr. Lorden of Mass Ave Rentals, LLC started by saying, as Mr. Beauregard previously mentioned, they have been working together now for two to three years to try to make this happen. Further, Mr. Lorden complimented the City of Gardner, Trevor, and the Mayor being very aggressive with trying to get this project going, as it was dead in the water because there was nothing available, however, between Trevor and the Mayor, who both kept banging on the State to see if there was any way of making this happen with any type of funding available and they always had dead ends where they said Gardner is not a gateway city, meaning Gardner does not have a population of 35,000 or more. The State finally developed a Grant that was tailor made called "underutilized properties" program which is specifically for blighted buildings.

Mr. Lorden further commented that since the grant has been approved, the City of Gardner has been great to work with and for, with the help of Rob Oliva, City Engineer, Dane Arnold, DPW Director, and Roland Jean, Building Commissioner.

Mr. Lorden displayed the Site Plan and pointed out strip of land owned by City that separates the public parking from private parking. Mr. Lorden stated he would like to loam and seed this area, as well as maintain with an irrigation system.

Mr. Lorden spoke of the buildings and said there will be 15 one-bedroom units and 14 two-bedroom units. In addition, there will be 43 parking spaces, handicap parking, as well as a loading/unloading zone, and ample room for snow storage. Have not decided where to put the dumpster but pointed out possibility of three spots where it could go. In addition, would like to add to the plan two handicap spots, and pointed out where, as well as the location of where the main entrance is.

Mr. Lorden asked if the Board members had any questions. Mr. Schafron questioned if main entrance location will be on Connors Street. Mr. Lorden replied yes, and there will be another entrance on Parker Street, but not the main entrance. T. Beauregard noted so the Board understands, the parking area is what triggered Site Plan Review for this project because it is creating of 15 parking spaces or more, therefore the project has to come before the planning board.

Mr. Lorden displayed a picture of what the building will look like and said on the first elevation outside of building he will be doing PVC with shaker panels along the way of the building. In addition, there will be two grid double-hung windows, as well as a hip style roof across the front of the building including soft downlighting to accent the sidewalk and the building (*Parker Street*). The side of the building will include some of the PVC siding and the rest of the building will remain brick that will be cleaned up, and repointed, especially towards the back side. The siding being used is an Everlast siding which is a composite siding much like a composite deck material.

Mr. Lorden pointed out where the stairway will be and said it is a second means of egress and pointed out elevator shaft as well. S. Cormier asked if there is one elevator. Mr. Lorden said yes.

P. Cormier asked if the bottom front section of the building facing Parker Street (*street front*) will be apartments as well. Mr. Lorden replied yes, and there is a lot of glass area, therefore, supplying shades for the tenants on that front side.

T. Beauregard asked if Mr. Lorden could speak about the challenges of both buildings. Mr. Lorden commented this project is a huge challenge. 42 Parker Street and 52 Parker Street have elevation differences therefore looked for a way to try and make the buildings jive together especially with handicap accessibility. Pointed out the elevator location which will go up to a main hallway as well as another hallway towards other building. Where the elevation change is, there will be a handicap lift as well as stairs to go up to the level from the lower building elevation to the higher building elevation.

Mr. Lorden displayed the interior floor plans, and noted what is important for all his buildings is safety and security so there will be a FOB system, as well as cameras, and an intercom system for identification which displays the face of the guest that can allowed to enter by buzzing them in. In addition, there will be cameras in the elevator. Further, the buildings are fully sprinkled required by code. Each unit will have granite countertops, central air conditioning and laundry hookups, as well as natural gas. S. Cormier asked the location of the mechanicals. Mr. Lorden pointed out on the display.

T. Beauregard asked what he will be doing with the extra space in the basement. Mr. Lorden replied storage.

T. Beauregard asked where the dumpster will go and noted it should be on a separate concrete pad and enclosed with fencing. Mr. Lorden pointed out a possible spot for dumpster.

T. Beauregard spoke of bringing the water in for irrigation system and how it will be brought in. Mr. Lorden pointed out a six-foot area where there is a dead space in the basement and will run a line right down a six-foot hallway underground then out (*pointed area on display*). Will dig under the granite curbing and put a stub up as well as an electrical line. This will come off a meter inside the building. T. Beauregard directed to R. Oliva and asked if this sounds good. Mr. Oliva answered yes.

P. Cormier asked if the parking meters will be removed. T. Beauregard said he believes all the parking meters are staying along Parker Street currently.

Mr. Schafron, Chairman called thrice for persons wishing to testify in favor of this proposition

No Public attended this meeting.

Mr. Schafron, Chairman called thrice for persons wishing to testify in opposition of this proposition.

Hearing none, Mr. Schafron closed the Public Meeting.

The Public Meeting closed at 7:45 p.m.

All documents referenced or used during the meeting are part of the official record and are available in the Department of Community Development and Planning pursuant to the Open Meeting and Public Records Law.