PLANNING BOARD

FOR THE

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

GENERAL HEARING

TUESDAY, JUNE 6, 2023

6:30 p.m.

Remote Meeting

Cambridge, Massachusetts

Mary T. Flynn, Chair

Catherine Preston Connolly, Vice Chair

Louis J. Bacci, Jr.

H Theodore Cohen

Hugh Russell

Tom Sieniewicz

Ashley Tan

Community Development Staff

Daniel Messplay

Swaathi Joseph

Erik Thorkildsen

Khalil Mogassabi

Mason Wells

Adithi Moogoor

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(6:31 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: Good evening. Welcome to the June 6, 2023 meeting of the Cambridge Planning Board. My name is Mary Flynn, and I am the Chair.

Pursuant to Chapter 2 of the Acts of the Acts of 2023 adopted by the Massachusetts General Court and approved by the Governor, the City is authorized to use remote participation at meetings of the Cambridge Planning Board.

All Board members, applicants, and members of the public will state their name before speaking. All votes will be taken by roll call.

Members of the public will be kept on mute until it is time for public comment. I will give instructions for public comment at that time, and you can also find instructions on the City's webpage for remote Planning Board meetings.

This meeting is being video and audio recorded and is being streamed live on the City of Cambridge online meeting portal and on cable television Channel 22, within Cambridge. There will also be a transcript of the proceedings.

I'll start by asking Staff to take Board member attendance and verify that all members are audible. Daniel?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn.

Lou Bacci, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

[Pause]

Absent. H Theodore Cohen, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

H THEODORE COHEN: Present, visible, and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Steven Cohen, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

[Pause]

Absent. Tom Sieniewicz, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Visible and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

HUGH RUSSELL: Present, visible, and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

ASHLEY TAN: Present, visible, and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Present, visible, and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

MARY FLYNN: Present, visible, and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That is six members present, and two members absent, which constitutes a quorum.

MARY FLYNN: And Daniel, I see that Lou is just -- logging on so do you want to just take --

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Good afternoon.

MARY FLYNN: -- record?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure. Lou Bacci, are you present, and is the meeting visible and audible to you?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Present and audible.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Lou. So we'll have Lou marked as present. So that's seven members present with

one member absent, which constitutes a quorum.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you very much.

* * * * *

(6:34 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: The first item is an Update from the Community Development Department. Please introduce the Staff present at the meeting with you as well. And Daniel, I believe you're going to be doing the update?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Sure. Thank you, Chair Flynn. I'm Daniel Messplay, Acting Director at Zoning and Development. And with me here this evening also from the Zoning and Development Team we have Swaathi Joseph, our Zoning Project Planner; and Mason Wells, our Associate Zoning Planner; and Adithi Moogoor, who is our Zoning and Development Intern.

Also from CDD we have Khalil Mogassabi, our Deputy Director, Chief Planner at CDD; and we have Erik Thorkildsen, who is an Urban Designer in our Community

Planning Division. I believe that concludes the Staff present.

So tonight we will be discussing two public hearings on multifamily residential proposals: one at 4850 Bishop Allen Drive and one at 2161 Mass. Ave.

We will also be discussing a Use Determination Request at 675 West Kendall Street and a BZA case for a sign variance at 210 Bent Street.

Next week, we will have a public hearing on a rear yard infill project at 55 Washburn Avenue, and we will also have a public hearing on a Zoning Amendment to remove the special permit requirement for cannabis retail stores. And that same zoning amendment will be scheduled for the Ordinance Committee on June 27.

On June 20, we'll have two zoning petition hearings. One is on the new Alewife Quadrangle zoning and the other is a Citizen's Petition dealing with calculating rear yard setbacks.

And to round out the month, we'll have our Annual Utility Report on June 27.

And that takes us right into July. And the first Tuesday of the month is our July 4 holiday, so we'll have a

break on that week. And then we'll pick right back up.

So that concludes the presentation, and I'll turn it back to the Chair.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Daniel. Are there any questions from Board members? Okay. I see none.

All right.

* * * * *

(6:37 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: Then the next item is Approval of meeting minutes. The Board has received certified transcripts for the meetings held on April 11, April 25, and May 2, 2023. If there are any questions from Board members, would you please say your name and raise your hand now?

[Pause]

Okay. All right. Seeing none, is there a motion to accept the transcript as the meeting minutes?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: So moved.

MARY FLYNN: Is there a second?

HUGH RUSSELL: Hugh second.

MARY FLYNN: Hugh. Daniel, could we have a roll call, please?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou Bacci?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: H Theodore Cohen?

H THEODORE COHEN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

[Pause]

Catherine, you might be muted. Catherine Preston Connolly?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Thank you. Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

[All vote YES]

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That is all members voting in favor.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Then we're going to move to the first public hearing, the next item on our agenda.

* * * * *

(6:38 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., H Theodore Cohen, Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: And that is case PB-396, a special permit application by Dobia Properties Corporation to develop a multifamily residential development at 48-50 Bishop Allen Drive.

We're going to begin this evening with an update first from CDD Staff. We'll then hear from the applicant, followed by public comment, and then the Board will discuss the application.

Our action is to grant or deny the requested special permit, or we could ask for additional information and continue the hearing to a future date.

Let's start with CDD Staff, and Mason is going to

summarize why this is before us.

MASON WELLS: Thank you, Chair Flynn. So this is a new application for a special permit in the Central Square Overlay District. The applicant is proposing to demolish an existing 11-unit residential building and develop a new, seven-story multifamily building consisting of 22 new units.

The project requires special permits to waive setbacks and open space requirements, as well as a special permit to increase the allowable height of the proposed building.

Zoning and Urban Design Staff have prepared memos summarizing the main issues, and a memo has also been provided from the Department of Public Works.

Staff are present to answer any questions the Board may have. Thank you.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Mason. Sean Hope is representing the applicant this evening. Attorney Hope, you will have up to 30 minutes to present, but please be as concise as possible. We can allow more time if it is necessary at our discretion.

If you would please start by introducing yourself and members of your project team and begin.

SEAN HOPE: Good evening, Madam Chair and members of the Board. For the record, Attorney Sean Hope, Hope Legal Law Offices in Cambridge. I'm here tonight as part of the Project Development team.

We have representing the owner, Dobia Properties, Corp. We have Stuart Rothman, who is the Principal. We also have as Associate Ben Deb as the Architect. We have Evan Stellman from Khalsa Design, Inc. We have our Traffic Engineer, Scott Thornton; and we also have -- helping us with our Civil Engineering, we have Joe Porter.

As was stated earlier, this is an application to construct 22 new units of housing at the corner of Douglas Street and Bishop Allen Drive. There is an existing aged building that was a former boarding house that is now a rental building with approximately 11 units in that building.

We're actually really happy to get to the Planning Board. This is a process that really started with initial meetings back in 2019 with CDD. Due to COVID and other related delays, we have now finally gotten to the Planning Board. But in that time, I believe the project has developed in a way that is positive and responsive to the

Zoning Criteria.

Quickly, to give you the zoning context: This is somewhat of a unique lot, as it has a base zoning of Business B. And if you know Central Square, a lot of the taller buildings on -- in Central Square along Mass. Ave. are allowed those heights up to 120' and a significant FAR of 3.0.

This site is actually on the back side of what people might think of Central Square on Bishop Allen Drive. And you can see in the picture, you see you're on Bishop Allen Drive looking at the building, the Cross Street is Douglas, and behind it you see the larger building that was part of the Mass. and Main zoning development.

So this site is located in the Business B base zoning district. It is in the Central Square Overlay District. And many of the special permits that we are applying for relate to the Central Square Overlay zoning.

But this is also in the Mass. and Main mixed-income subdistricts. I want to clarify for the Board we are not seeking any relief under the Mass. and Main subdistrict. But it does give you some idea of the context of the heights that are surrounding this building, specifically the new

construction. That Mass. and Main building, as it's often called, is 19 stories.

And as Mr. Wells had said, we are applying for a special permit under the Central Square Overlay to allow for a height of 69'. The ordinance requires that heights over 55' need a special permit from the Planning Board. So we're below the maximum but above the 55'.

There is a bulk plane formula that requires that top seventh-story to be pushed back from the street. All of this will be shown to you by the Project Architect.

And then there are waivers for open space and for setbacks. That was part of the zoning when it was passed, as well as any amendments thereof.

Briefly, about outreach: As I mentioned, this project started in 2019. In 2020, we had two neighborhood meetings. Both times, the project had not materially changed. But at the time, it was thought to go and answer further questions.

We did go out to the Central Square Overlay -- excuse me, the Central Square Advisory Committee. They reviewed and supported this project at that time.

And then after COVID, you know, a lot of time had

been lost. And there was an additional two meetings that we were held again to get neighborhood feedback and to apprise neighbors and abutters of the proposal.

So in many ways, there has been robust dialogue. I think many folks are eager that this project is getting before the Planning Board, including ourselves.

I'd now like to turn it over to Evan, the Project Architect, to show how the building is designed and in compliance with some of the criteria of the ordinance.

EVAN STELLMAN: Thank you, Sean. For the record, my name is Evan Stellman of Khalsa Design, Incorporated, with offices at 17 Ivaloo Street in Somerville.

I'll begin by walking through the existing conditions and some of the surrounding site parameters, and then I'll walk through what we're proposing.

So we're looking at this three-story blue structure that's on the corner of Bishop Allen Drive and Douglas Street. This top right image shows a front perspective of the existing structure, and this bottom right image shows a side view from Douglas Street.

Again, these are just some more images of the site from the context. The top right we show the structures

opposite of Douglas Street. Bottom right is coming up Douglas Street, and our property is at the rear corner there. And then bottom left image is coming up Bishop Allen, and the property is at [indiscernible].

This just shows some recently completed projects from an aerial view, the tallest being the market-central structure at 195'. That's labeled as A on all these images.

The second structure we'd like to point out is at the corner of Bishop Allen Drive and Columbia Street. So that's just opposite of the block here. And that cuts out at 70'.

And then the third structure we'd like to point out here is the Bishop Allen Drive residences located at 47 Bishop Allen Drive. And that tops out at about 45'. That's directly across from our parcel.

And then, again, these are just some other perspectives of those structures I just talked about. The one opposite of our site tops out at 47', 47 Bishop Allen Drive. And then this structure here tops out at 70'.

Here are some images of some recently completed structures in the neighborhood; primarily the Market Central, which tops out at 195', and then 10 Essex Street.

This is the existing site plan. You can see the shaded grey region is the existing structure. It's pulled more towards the front of the site. And then we have some areas of open space behind that.

On all of these plans, Bishop Allen Drive is going to be at the bottom of the sheet, and Douglas Street is going to be on the right side.

This is the proposed site plan. The highlighted grey region shows the proposed building footprint. And the red lines show the required setbacks. So generally, we are setting the building back 5' on each side, and that includes the two front sides.

This is a diagram showing the setbacks of the adjacent structures. So our proposed development is right here. Directly to the right of us on Douglas Street the structure is set back 4'. And then opposite the block, the One Columbia Street project is not set back at all.

Moving onto the landscape, this just the proposed, or an existing tree survey showing the existing trees on the site. This is the proposed landscape plan. We are proposing to relocate one street tree, keep one street tree on Douglas Street, and then essentially fill in where we can

on the site, with some shorter trees and shrubs and some shorter landscape areas.

I'd just like to highlight the brick pavers at the rear of the site would be pervious neighbors, along with pervious pavers along Douglas Street, pervious pavers along Bishop Allen Drive, and then some concrete paving along the left side of the site.

And, again, this is just a more in-depth landscape plan showing what plants we'll be using.

Moving onto the exterior design of the structure, this sheet highlights all of the materials that we're proposing. So what we wanted to do is define the prominent base for the structure, the middle portion, and then the penthouse would be a separate top.

So the base we're proposing a cast stone veneer with a cast stone water table down here. This is the Bishop Allen Drive elevation. So we do have an enclosed transformer room at the left side of this elevation.

For the middle portion of the structure, we're proposing cementitious panel rain screens with concealed fasteners, which is a cementitious Cembrit material. And then at the penthouse we're proposing the same material of

an alternate color. And we take that material, we bring it down the prominent corner, and we use that on the base as well.

Looking in more detail at the balconies, this right-side elevation shows the Douglas Street elevation where we broke up the main massing in the middle with balconies that protrude over the public realm. And those are clad with cementitious panels with reglets. The underside we're using a faux wood soffit, and then a cementitious panel rainscreen would be for the main massing.

These are the proposed perspectives that we have of the project. As you can see, the Market Central in the background tops out at about 200'. We've stepped down to our structure, which is at 69'11" and then stepped down again to the structure across the street.

And then this is the existing perspective of that same view. And you can just see how it changes.

This is our second perspective looking towards Bishop Allen Drive from the parking lot across the street. Again, we have a prominent, heavy material at the bottom of cast stone, a secondary lighter material in the middle, and then we cap it off with this darker material at the top.

And then we use that to break up the massing in the middle.

And this is the existing perspective of that same view.

And this is our final perspective. This is looking up Bishop Allen Drive towards Douglas Street. So this is the elevation that overlooks the parking lot for Market Central. We're breaking up the pretty wide, boxy massing with these balconies that protrude out over the side yard. Again, base, middle and top.

And then that's just the existing perspective.

I have a few floor plans. I can walk through them if the Board so desires. But if not, I'll turn it over to Sean if he has anything else to add.

SEAN HOPE: Thanks, Evan. Nothing more to add. I just was remiss to mention that the objectives of this proposal and of the Central Square Overlay are also guided by the Central Square Action Plan and the Central Square Development Guidelines.

Many of the plans and the guidelines focus the activity for Mass. Ave. and they talk about active retail promoting a diversity of income, of housing types. But those still apply to even this eastern end of the Central

Square Overlay.

And also to note for the Board, even though this is in a Central Square Overlay, it does abut the BA Zoning District, which drops down to 45 feet. So in many ways this is a transition from the larger-scale, more active Mass. Ave. And so, this multifamily residential building creates, we believe, an appropriate transition from Mass. Ave. to the residential space above.

I also failed to mention that this application is proposing no parking. We initially had a parking relief requested waiver, but because of the zoning amendment passe by the Cambridge City Council, we do not have to provide for relief.

But I think just wanted to note that this is a site that is very proximate to multiple sources of transit, and it is an area that can accommodate additional housing without parking.

Thank you.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Before we move on, just I think it would be helpful to go through some of the floor plans, like the first-floor plan and then maybe a sample or two of the upper floors with the units and just, you know,

quickly go through sort of what the unit configuration is -- how many one, two, three-beds, et cetera.

EVAN STELLMAN: My pleasure. So this --

MARY FLYNN: Thank you.

EVAN STELLMAN: -- plan here is the ground-floor plan. Bishop Allen's at the bottom, Douglas on the right. So you would enter off of the corner of Bishop Allen and Douglas through the entry vestibule. There's a modest-size lobby, with a bike room included as part of the lobby.

At the rear of this level on Bishop -- or on Douglas Street, there are 2 one-bedroom units, and then we have a transformer alcove for an indoor transformer located at the front, left side of the structure off of Bishop Allen Street.

Moving up to the upper floors, I'll look at this floor plan on the right side. This would be a typical upper floor. You have four units around a central elevator and two staircases. Each unit on these levels is two bedrooms, one bathroom.

And then as we start to move up to the upper floors and we step the building back, I'll look at this sixth-floor plan here. It's a three-unit level. The units

at the rear stay as two bedrooms, one bathroom, and the unit at the front becomes a two-bedroom, two-bathroom unit with the pairs.

Up at the penthouse level we have two bed -- two units at this level. The one at the rear is three bedrooms two bathrooms, and the one at the front is a two-bedroom, two-bathroom unit.

MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you so much for that. I'm sure the Board will have questions. But first we want to move on to public comment. So any members of the public who wish to speak should now click the button that says, "Raise hand." If you're calling in by phone, you can raise your hand by pressing *9.

As of 5:00 p.m. yesterday, the Board had received written communications from Oliver Wahnschafft, Andy Brody, Dan Totten, Jeff Purcell, and Nancy Ryan on this case. Written communications received after 5:00 p.m. yesterday will be entered into the record.

So I see we have a few hands up already. So I'm going to ask Staff now to unmute speakers one at a time. You should begin by saying your name and address, and Staff will confirm if we can hear you. After that, you'll have up

to three minutes to speak before I ask you to wrap up.

So let me now turn it over to Daniel.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. It looks like our first speaker is -- and I apologize in advance for the pronunciation -- Rachel Zanapalidou? Followed by Lee Farris. So Rachel, please begin by giving your name and address.

RACHEL ZANAPALIDOU: Hi. This is Rachel Zanapalidou, and I'm the owner with my husband, Oliver Wahnschafft, of 8 Douglas Street.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Rachel. You can go ahead.

RACHEL ZANAPALIDOU: Thank you. Yeah. I sent a written communication too, but I know I have a few minutes here. I would like to point out the following:

First, the views that were shown here are in some way, and I apologize for the word, but misleading, misguiding. The massing of the building with the background of the building on Mass. and Main is misguiding. I think it is more appropriate to see the massing of the building with the other buildings; the one-story building on Douglas, as well as the three-story building on 8, on 12 Douglas, as

well as the three-story building at 8 Douglas and the rest of all the Douglas properties.

Even on Bishop Allen, again, because of the perspectives shown, it is misguiding. The building that is across from it is only a three-and-a-half story mansard Victorian.

So moving on, I would like to ask the developers why is there a need for special permits, when the special Central Square Overlay District regulations were already crafted carefully to allow for quite a bit -- quite a bit of relief in terms of FAR and height and now parking, and by taking into consideration the adjacent streets so they do not impact negatively the community.

So I don't understand why there is then, again, a request for even more relief.

And -- okay, I know I don't have a lot of time -- what I wrote in the email is that I feel that the massing is immense and will impact negatively the surrounding buildings in terms of the lack of (sic) sound, the residents of such building.

Also the lack of setbacks of such a huge volume would also impact negatively and could potentially impact

the water, the drainage and the water -- the water maintenance.

And, you know, the lack of open space: We are opposed to that. And also, it is not possible to imagine that the traffic on Douglas Street, a small Street, will not be impacted by adding 22 additional units -- you know, a small community of maybe 50 people. It's -- it would be hard to believe that it will not be impacted. Thank you.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is Lee Farris, followed by Donald Harding. Lee, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

LEE FARRIS: Hi. This is Lee Farris. And my address is 269 Norfolk Street. I live in the Port. And I often pass by this -- the corner where this building is proposed.

The first point I want to mention is the developer held a public meeting in September, but since then they have not contacted the Port email list to invite residents to tonight's meeting, nor did they invite people who attended the September meetings. So my feeling is the developers should maintain contact with residents through all the steps of a project.

One of my biggest concerns is that the developer wants to cut down one significant street tree on Douglas. And the word, "significant" is a City definition, as I'm sure the Planning Board members know. And that seems like a really bad idea, given our city's tree canopy loss.

I agree with the City's CDD memo, which says the tree should stay and it asks the developer to plant a new street tree on Douglas night and another on Bishop Allen Drive, which I think is reasonable, given that they are proposing to cut down a significant tree on their property.

Another concern is visibility at the corner for cars that turn onto Bishop Allen from Douglas Street. It's a dangerous intersection already, and it looks like the visibility might be even worse from the new design.

I hope the Planning Board will ask the developer to improve that visibility, and that fits with the way the City's CDD memo is already suggesting redesign of the building in several ways.

Now, while this process will result in roughly four affordable units, the existing building of 11 units is all naturally-occurring affordable housing. So actually this project causes our neighborhood to have a net loss of

affordability. And that's why I and other neighbors that I've talked to are not enthusiastic about this project. I wish instead that this proposal were for 100 percent affordable housing.

If the project moves forward, I hope that the developer is required to provide a good relocation package to the existing tenants, with enough time and funds to enable them to stay in Cambridge instead of being displaced, as so many are.

Lastly, I want to ensure that the developer meets with the Elks Lodge, which is an abutter across Bishop Allen, to discuss mitigation and preservation of access to their driveway. Because the Elks are one of Cambridge's few Black businesses, and it's important to me that they not be negatively impacted by this project.

Thank you.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is Donald Harding, followed by Amira V. Donald, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

[Pause]

Donald? You can go ahead.

[Pause]

Donald, it shows that you are unmuted, but we aren't hearing you at the moment.

[Pause]

Okay. Donald, we'll come back to you. I'm going to go home and move along on the list. Let's go to Amira V., followed by Patrick Samuels. So Amira, please begin by giving your name and address.

AMIRA VALLIANI: Sure. My name is Amira Valliani, and I live at 120 Cherry -- also in the Port. And I just wanted to offer a different view, which is that -- you know, I am sort of new to learning about this project, but I am really in support of it.

I think we need more housing generally in this city, and it matters having this development sort of -- new housing. You know, I don't have a problem with the added height. I think it's -- I personal think Market Central is always a great addition to Central Square and to the city.

And one of my favorite parts about it is that -- that corner where Market Central is with the new Asian shops, the new restaurants there, it's just a really lively place, and that should too, I think, add a little more zest to this area of Central Square and the Port.

And so, you know, I understand the concerns that some of my other peers took into account. And, you know, I'd encourage the Planning Board to look into issues like making sure that the street's maintained, the streets are safe, and -- tree canopy. But, you know, I for one as a neighbor of the potential development, I just want to voice my support.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. Let's go to Patrick Samuels. And then we'll try Donald Harding one more time. So Patrick, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

PATRICK SAMUELS: Hi, can you hear me?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes. Please go ahead.

PATRICK SAMUELS: All right. My name is Patrick Samuels and I'm actually a member of the Elks. So I'm just speaking on behalf of the Elks organization. I agree with a lot of things some of the other speakers had to say. We've written a letter here,

"Massasoit Lodge is a lodge of Elks located at 55 Bishop Allen Drive. This is written concerning the upcoming construction project at 48-50 Bishop Allen Drive.

"The Lodge is located directly across the street

from the project construction site. Our concerns are the effect this project will have on the financial operations of our lodge, the potential infrastructural issues that could after our building and other environmental disruptions.

"We've attended the community meetings in the past, and although they have been helpful in learning about the project in general, because of so many people in attendance, there was not an opportunity to discuss the specific concerns of Massasoit Lodge.

"We are aware that they've had negotiations with other abutters, and what our biggest requests would be that the owner and developer of the project try to have an in-depth conversation with representatives of the lodge, prior to any special permit approval to be given to them.

"Massasoit Lodge 129 is a member of the Improved Benevolent Protective Order of the Elks of the world. Ours is a national organization.

"And again, at this particular we are directly across the street from where the project is going to be held, and we would just like to have that opportunity to sit down and discuss in more details how this is going to affect us, and how hopefully we can hopefully work together to move

forward.

"So thank you very much for your time."

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you.

It looks like we have one more speaker, so I'll just do a quick last call for any speakers who wish to speak on 48-50 Bishop Allen Drive to please use the "Raise Hand" function.

Dan Totten, you're up next. Please begin by giving your name and address.

DAN TOTTEN: Yeah. Hi. My name is Dan Totten. I live at 54 Bishop Allen Drive, which happens to be the apartment building across the opposite corner of exactly this building.

And so, I just want to say a few things. First of all, the notice that was posted on the building only listed an in-person meeting location. And so, there are actual tenants of the building who showed up to the City Hall Annex and were locked out.

I'm not sure if they're on the call. They -- I sent them the dial-in link. I really hope that maybe we can help offer instructions for how to raise your hand if you're dialing in to make sure to make sure that they speak.

But to my comments, first of all I just want to say that, you know, my landlord is the owner of this building. And he's one of the best landlords in Cambridge. However, I think there's a fundamental disagreement about whether this project is good for our neighborhood or not.

Right now, there are lots of regular, great people living in that building who can afford to live here because the market -- the rents are below market, and it's -- there's no doubt that this will replace regular people with really high salary people who make $250,000 at Google. I don't see that as adding zest to our neighborhood.

But to speak to some of the more specific issues, because I know that the Planning Board doesn't generally vote things down, first of all I really, really, really don't understand why we have to cut down the tree on Douglas -- the street tree on Douglas, right?

This is a healthy tree. It's in great shape. The application -- sorry, the application talks about how the sidewalk is in terrible condition, but take a walk down that sidewalk. It's not in terrible condition. I think they're making an excuse to be able to cut down that street tree.

And I don't think it's right. We've already lost

several trees in the neighborhood recently, it's -- there aren't a lot of trees. And we should be saving that tree. And I think that the Planning Board should ask them to save that tree.

Second of all, I want to back what Lee said about visibility at the corner. I think it's a very dangerous corner. If you stand there for 15 minutes at rush hour you'll see why, and I think that there's an opportunity with this project just like we did at Binney Street and Cardinal Medeiros to improve the visibility at that corner, not make it worse.

Finally, I just want to say that, you know, I think it's problematic that the developer has not sat down with the Elks. I know for a fact that they reached a financial settlement with the neighbors on the other side, who happen to be white, and I just want to -- I'm uncomfortable as a neighbor seeing that dynamic where there hasn't been a special meeting of the Elks to discuss the impact on their business that that building is a center of Black and African American community life in this neighborhood, in addition to just being a center of community life for our neighborhood overall.

And they will be impacted by this business. They will not be able to have outdoor events on Saturdays anymore. Maybe there won't be as much access to their -- I just -- I feel really crummy that they haven't had a chance, and I really hope the Planning Board asks that to be a thing.

Thanks.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. And just a reminder, if you are dialing in by phone, *9 is how you can raise and lower your hand. So if you're dialing in and you're interested in speaking on this matter, please press *9.

Our next speaker is Amy Chu. Amy, please begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

AMY CHU: Hi. Actually, I'm here with three housemates or -- yeah, three other housemates of Bishop -- 50 Bishop Allen Drive. And first of all, we tried to join the meeting. There was sign that was posted on my building that gave, like, a physical location for a hearing at 344 Hampshire Street. And I don't think we got any communication.

If there was communication, it wasn't consistent. It didn't really try to let us know where the hearing

actually was, or where the link would be, or that hearing was moved to a virtual meeting. So we feel a little bit played by that.

I think sticking -- well, now sticking to the topic of a meeting, just echoing that this is a really vibrant community space. Like, there's a farmers' market every Monday around the corner. There's lots of, like, immigrant and BIPOC communities that just like really engage in the cultural and commercial life here.

And, like we said this is afford -- like this housing right now is 100 percent affordable for everyone in this house. We have, like, teachers and artists and people who are not, you know, able to afford the type of housing that you're proposing to build here with the special permit.

So, you know, as a current resident and just also to set a precedent for future projects like this, which will probably come up, we just want to reiterate, like a relocation package: So far, we haven't gotten any specific communication about what that is. We're sort of waiting on the lines for what will happen.

I know that there's a process that has to be gone through, but sort of like this type of sporadic

communication is not very -- like it doesn't give us peace as residents here.

And so for a relocation package, we just want, like, specifics and details. We want to see if it really is comparable to where we're living, where there's just such a vibrant access to the life in Central Square.

And the location: A lot of us have to commute to work. So yeah, I don't know if my housemates have anything to add to that.

JESSI LAMB: I can add. My name is Jessi Lamb (phonetic). And I also live at 50 Bishop Allen. I think I'm not completely familiar with the process of, like, applying for variances and going through the whole development to get approved.

But what I'm taking away from this meeting is that there was a lack of consideration for the Elks Lodge, even though other abutters and neighbors and were talked to.

So what I'm taking away from this meeting is I think there needs to be more planning and communication done there, as well as with the current neighbors -- or current residents and people involved. Because, like Amy said, we weren't able to find the location of the meeting. And,

like, the stakes is our current housing.

I think to end, like, in general, whether it's approved or not, I think it should go on with more affordable housing than 20 percent. Thank you.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. Chair Flynn, that concludes the speakers on the list. We did have Donald Harding earlier, but it looks like they've lowered their hands. So I'm going to turn it back to you.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you, Daniel. So we're now going to move from public comment to Board discussion. Additional written communications or comments may be submitted for the record moving forward.

We -- in addition to the public comments that we got, we also had a very detailed memo from the Community Development Department Staff, and a memo from the Department of Public Works on this project. So let's start with Board member questions for either the project team or Staff.

Who would like to begin? Okay, Ashley.

ASHLEY TAN: Thank you. First question -- I may have missed this but -- was the proponent envisioning rental condos or I guess rental leases or condos for sale for this property? So I was interested in that.

I was also interested -- it was rare for me to see such a high ratio of two-beds vs. other -- you know, unit splits. So I was just wondering if there was a reason for that. And that is all.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. I think what we'll do is gather the questions first, and then ask for responses all at once from the proponent.

Ted?

H THEODORE COHEN: Yeah. Thank you. So the DPW memo indicates that the flood elevations that were used were -- have been superseded by I guess newer and higher flood elevations, and that that may impact and require changes at least to the first floor, and perhaps to the entire building. And I'm wondering whether there's been any response to that.

Tied into that is the comment in CDD's memo and also my observation of it that the transformer screen on Bishop Allen Drive is really incredibly unsightly at that particular location, especially since it will end up being right next to the -- I guess the transformers for the Mass. and Main project, so you end up with just quite a lengthy area on a heavy pedestrian street that's really just showing

mechanicals and nothing on the streetscape. Those are my questions right now.

So again, whether consideration has been given to somehow relocating the transformers or changing how the air vents will be handled.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah. Basically I have two questions. I have some other comments, but I'll wait to give those until the appropriate time.

One question that was raised by Eric was are there going to be vent pipes or factory vents, kitchen vents on the exterior? None show on the drawings or elevations.

So I want to know whether -- nor does there seem to be any chases on the floor plan, because that would allow those utilities to run vertically. So you could tell us what's going on there.

The second thing I find strange is that there is a transformer in one corner, and there's a huge transformer in the other corner of the building. I don't understand why you need two transformers?

MARY FLYNN: Okay. We will ask that question. Did you have anything else --

HUGH RUSSELL: Nope.

MARY FLYNN: -- at this point? Okay. Tom?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair. Three questions. I noticed in the perspectives at first what I thought was a drawing error, but it was trying to represent angles on the balconies.

And I'd like to understand what the architectural logic is to the balconies. They may make sense, but they look bulky. I couldn't put it together. So if the architect could quickly take me through his thinking on that, I'd appreciate that.

Secondly, the correspondence shared with the Board were a number of letters outlining a public meeting, or at least a virtual meeting, in which questions were posted and answers were given, but there was no dialogue. It was all done in a chat format.

So very strange and very hands-off, and I wanted to understand the proponent's description of that particular meeting. There was a number of letters complaining about -- and puzzled about that format.

And lastly, back to the tree demolition: I really want to understand why it's necessary to remove a street

tree that at least by report of the community is thriving.

Thank you.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Lou?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: I'd also like to hear some more about this public meeting that had questions in a chat and no ability to have any back and forth. The street tree, I think they should protect it as much as possible.

I'm really disappointed they didn't include any views from Douglas Street south. The perspective's going to change considerably in that direction.

And I had one simple question: The pavers, the paved areas at the rear of the building, they don't seem to have doors to access those areas. I didn't see them in the drawings. But I'm sure they're there, but I'd like to just be reassured.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. So I think that is all the questions at the moment. So Attorney Hope, let's go through them, and we can direct them to whoever is the appropriate person on your team, if you would.

So Ashley's questions had to do with is the presentation rental or condo, and could you explain the high ratio of the two-bedroom units to the total number in the

presentation?

SEAN HOPE: Thank you, Madam Chair. So to begin with, you know, whether the project is rental, or condo is -- I think the Board knows -- these are factors, market factors. You permit in one market, you build in another, and then you either lease or sell in the third market.

So I think it's premature to actually state exactly what that would be. But I don't think that's atypical of projects of this size, especially in the environment that we're at.

I will let Evan speak to the number of two beds. But I think as you can see, you know, this is a 5000-square-foot lot, which is typical of these smaller lots, even in such a high-density district.

And by providing some setbacks 5' on really all sides of the building -- and partially that is also to relieve some congestion at the corner, what you're really left with is, you know, units that have to be livable.

And so, I think what we have tried to do was tried to utilize the existing space to the extent we could. You know, we do have three bedrooms in there. And -- you know, and largely this is really about the size and shape of the

building.

But Evan, do you want to speak a little bit more to the floor plan layout?

EVAN STELLMAN: Yeah, I'll just reiterate that after the setbacks are taken into account, we essentially have a 60' wide x 60' long building. So it worked out very, very generously in our favor to have two-bedroom units on each corner of that. And that's essentially the second floor through the fifth floor. So it worked out really well to have two-bedroom units.

The two one-bedroom units on the ground-floor and then the three-bedroom units on the upper floor. So it's just the nature of the architecture lends itself to the two-bedroom units.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Then moving on, Ted had a question about the DPW memo, which cited that the building is designed to floodplain elevations that are out-of-date. Has there been any response to that?

And also, has there been any consideration to -- for a new location on the transformer screen?

And then there's also the question about why are there two transformer locations?

SEAN HOPE: I'll just speak -- I'll let -- we have Joe Porter to speak to the civil piece. But I will just speak to the transformer. I think one of the things that that is not shown in the pictures, but I did hear one of the Planning Board's references: There is a large transformer that is serving the Mass. and Main, the Market Central building almost directly on the property line of the building.

One of the reasons why we located the transformer in certain elements is it would be very unpleasant to have residential units abutting a transformer that is -- you know, over 6' tall, very blocky even though it's screened. It really does impact the quality of life.

Also, there's been a strong push to have transformers on the inside of buildings. So we thought we were, you know, at substantial cost was making sure that we could have the transformer inside.

And then there's also -- there's two street sides, and then we have a residential abutter directly on the right-hand side. So it was like, "Where do we put the transformer? Do we put it, you know, next to a residential abutter and then put residential units?"

So I think if we were going to have the transformer inside the building, this is the most logical place to put it. But I'll turn it over to Mr. Porter to talk about the resiliency issues in the DPW.

MARY FLYNN: Well, before you get to that, is there a second transformer? Hugh was concerned about that. But it looked like there was another transformer on the site in addition to the one that's screened inside the building.

SEAN HOPE: Evan, do you want to speak to that?

EVAN STELLMAN: There's not. I can share my screen real quick to have this show.

MARY FLYNN: Okay.

EVAN STELLMAN: So the transformer room's at the bottom left along Bishop Allen Drive. We do have a transformer along Douglas Street, but there's no second transformer on the plan.

MARY FLYNN: I see. It's the trash room. Okay. Is that the area you were referring to, Hugh? Okay. Okay. Then if we can go back to the floodplain issues, please?

JOE PORTER: Joe Porter. Sorry. We had used the current -- when the map of the plans were drawn up -- we're in the process of updating the stormwater. The plans were

drawn in February of last year. Apparently, the stormwater and 2070 flood elevations were changed in March of last year. We're in the process of updating those and getting the building in compliance with that ordinance.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Okay. Then there was some architecture -- other architectural issues. Question about bathroom vents on the exterior of the building: Will there be vents, and why aren't they shown if there are?

Tom had a question on the perspectives, the angles on the balconies. And then we have some questions about the public meeting as well.

And let's see: Tom, you had a third question. I'm sorry I didn't get it written down.

TOM SIENIEWICZ: It was on the tree demolition: Why that was necessary?

MARY FLYNN: The tree. Thank you. Okay. So let's do the -- let's do them in that order: The architectural, the public meeting issues, and then the trees. Who from the proponent would like to take -- respond to those?

EVAN STELLMAN: I can speak to the architectural

components. Let me just pull up the floor plan again. Let me share my screen.

So with regard to the vents, it's not our intention to vent out of any of the front elevations -- Bishop Allen or Douglas Street. We do have a chase located adjacent hat the elevator shaft, which we can expand as necessary to the vent up to the roof.

We haven't designed all of the MEPs yet. So I don't know to what extent we're going to be venting out the sides. But it would only be on the left side and the right side.

With regard to the balconies, it might be better to do it from a floor plan. So yeah, they are angled on every other floor. So the second floor they're angled inward to each other. The third floor they're flat, and then on the upper floors they angle away from each other. So when you're looking at it from the street elevation, it kind of undulates as it goes up the building.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. And that is purely just for a design element, or --

EVAN STELLMAN: Yeah.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

EVAN STELLMAN: Then I'll -- like the street tree that we're removing now, so it's a little tough to see on this plan, but this black dot is the existing street tree. We're proposing to remove that and to plant a new street tree here. It really opens up the sidewalk on Douglas Street here.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So I thought during the presentation there was discussion of a tree that was being relocated. So is that the one that you're talking about there?

EVAN STELLMAN: Yeah. We're removing this tree and planting a new one. I'm sorry, I --

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So it's a new one?

EVAN STELLMAN: Yeah.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Okay. And then this was mentioned by a couple of Planning Board members: There's concern about that a Zoom meeting where people were allowed to just participate via the chat room. So we'd just like to understand the reason why the meeting is structured that way, from your perspective?

SEAN HOPE: Yes. Thank you. I'd like to touch on that as well as just some of the comments made about

outreach. As I mentioned, so there has been a total of four community meetings. Three were in-person, one was in Zoom -- via Zoom.

We had two in-person meetings in 2020. We had fully planned to be at the Planning Board in that same year or shortly thereafter. Those were in-person, full, robust meetings with feedback.

After the onset of COVID, obviously the project was paused, and we didn't resume. When we brought the project back, the project had not changed significantly -- actually at all since then.

And because it was COVID, there was a hesitancy to do in-person meetings. So we set up an information session. And the information session was to reintroduce the same project that we had a year and a half ago, and to take feedback.

We used the webinar function, which is somewhat clunky. But admittedly, there was a lot of comments that hey, this is not -- we didn't have to have a dialogue.

We subsequently had another follow-up meeting. This is now three meetings. The project hadn't changed. We had full dialogue. We had heard comments. We also opened

up, made ourselves available to -- you know, anybody who wanted to talk about the project before or after.

I also want to make note that there were representatives from the Elks that came back in 2020 when we thought the project was going forward. They sat in the office of the owner, and we had a full conversation about construction mitigation.

I fully respect, you know, since 2020 it's a long time, and I -- you know, we are happy to meet with the Elks. But I just want to make it clear that we did have a full dialogue. And when we got the feedback about the Zoom meeting, we promptly held another in-person meeting and solved that issue.

So there have been four public meetings since then, and -- you know, if we made a mistake by having that meeting, we fully rectified it by having a full in-person meeting.

But the project hasn't changed since 2020, and we do feel that we've answered questions to everyone's satisfaction. But there has been no lack of an opportunity to be heard.

Also, at the meetings in 2020, there was a

significant request that the owner reach out to the residents. We did reach out to those residents. But frankly, the building has turned over several times.

So the residents who were there back in 2020 and 2021 was probably a new set of residents there. But again, you know, we are not presumptuous that we are going to get approved. And as the Board knows, this is a long project, even before demolition.

So we believe that the owner is in good contact with the tenants, and we are happy to continue any dialogue that is necessary.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. And just two more points that were raised: There was concern that there's -- there weren't any views from Douglas Street south, and I'm just wondering if you have those, and they just aren't in the packet, or if we could potentially see those?

And also, Lou had a question about the paved areas at the rear, and is there going to be access to those, I guess, from the residence?

SEAN HOPE: So in terms of the views and perspectives, we can gladly give you perspectives from Douglas Street. I think that the context of the buildings

along Douglas Street are the properties -- the lots in the building themselves are very close in proximity.

So that I don't think there is actually a great view of the building, but we'd gladly give that the Board, and we could make that part of any follow-up meeting that the Planning Board -- to make sure that those views are incorporated into the Planning Board's decision.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. That would be helpful. And then the access to the rear.

SEAN HOPE: Yes.

MARY FLYNN: Is there --

SEAN HOPE: It's intended that the units on the ground floor have doors that go out to those patios.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. All right. Do Board members have any other questions at this point? If not, we're going to move to discussion.

[Pause]

All right. Seeing none, Board members, what are your thoughts on the project so far? And if you have a thought on what actions should be taken this evening, please feel free to state that. Who would like to begin?

Catherine?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Sure. I'll kick things off. I -- in some respects, I feel like review of this project is premature, where the -- we're working from the wrong flood maps, which may require redesign of the ground floor. I'm not sure how we could move forward with anything here.

And, you know, I think that the CDD memo lists a lot of design concerns that need to be addressed. I do think the tree preservation needs to be addressed. I'm -- I don't have a lot of thoughts on this, but -- you know, I guess in the interest of giving as much feedback as we can, I would personally -- you know, as others have noted, like to see -- you know, more three-bedroom units.

I would like to see it -- you know, I think affordable housing if we're going forward with this density at this location.

But I -- you know, it's hard to comment on what's here when I feel like we don't know how drastically those flood changes are going to have to necessitate changes to the design.

So I guess I'm just a little frustrated that, you know, we have a design that hasn't apparently changed in

three years, despite feedback from CDD, from DPW, from the neighbors, and yet it's clear that changes are required because of the change in flood maps.

And I'm just -- I'm perplexed, and certainly not ready to move forward with this.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you for those comments. Hugh let's hear from you next.

HUGH RUSSELL: Okay. Thank you. I agree completely with Catherine's comments. It's going to be tricky to meet those requirements. And I think we need to see how that's going to happen.

I went through the Staff report. And I just wanted to comment on some of the issues. But -- well take a step backward to start. This is a seven-story building that's kind of blocky. And it's not surprising, because that's what the site is zoned for.

And, you know, sometime probably in 1924, a line was drawn on Bishop Allen Drive. It said it was going to be a dense business district south -- well, basically from Franklin Street to Bishop Allen Drive.

And this is about the only place where buildings that were of smaller scale are still in place. You know?

There are only a few of them. So I think it was 100 years ago, you know, when this zoning happened.

And then in a more recent rezoning in Central Square, there was an effort to make it easier and to get more housing in Central Square. That's where the special permits came from that we're being asked to give.

So sure it's going to be a significant change, but it's a change that's been under consideration for 100 years. And to that, I look at the building. And I say, "Well, is this -- you know, a nicely designed building?"

And, you know, I perhaps differ with the other two architects who've weighed in on the articulated balconies or bay windows. And I kind of -- I think that's fine. You know, I wouldn't have done it on a project that I designed, but -- you know, it's -- it's their project, and I think you can make the case that it creates a certain level of interest.

And in particular, because along Bishop Allen Drive the bay windows are all in bedrooms, it's not so much a space planning issue. And, you know, it gives you a little extra space in the bedroom, but it's not sorely needed.

I don't like the dark greenish-gray color depicted in the renderings and in some of the elevations. I think that's incompatible with the kind of pinky-beige color on the main body of the building.

Now, in some of the renderings and elevations, that dark greenish-gray ends up being a light gray that is about the same light to dark ratio. It's -- so it is more compatible with -- to do that. So what you're changing is the color, but not the intensity. That's one approach.

And more -- I think that's a better approach, but the -- you could do what was done at the other end of the block, which was to simply make the colors more compatible.

Now, the underside of the bay windows on Bishop Allen Drive is a sort of a faux-wood color, which is warm and -- you know, pinkish or reddish. And so, if you were going to keep this -- the gray stuff a dark color because you like that better, then I think it's got to be a brownish-gray or a brown even to be more compatible with the beige.

Now, you know, so I'm not going to -- I think it's a serious thing that needs to be clearer. I think it's a problem with the way in which these things are looked at.

You know, we might put a condition that says, "Well, we don't care what shows on the rendering, we want it to be pretty, and we'll look at the mockup." And that's been successful.

Continuing along with the Staff, there's a suggestion that the corner turret, which is an open porch on the top level of the -- that that filigree above, around the porch, be brought down. I think it's worth looking at.

So I don't want to prejudge as to whether -- the way it's designed would be better than the way that was suggested. But I think it should be looked at.

The, you know, if you can reduce the door to the transformer room, this also creates -- and I think it's -- one of Erik's comments was the survey showed a basement, but there is no basement, to be clear. And so I think that needs to be clarified.

Moving along, Erik made an interesting comment about the façade system using aluminum reglets, because you see this product installed in a number of places in the city, and it doesn't -- it looks -- it doesn't look good. It can't be built as crispy as it can be drawn. So I think that's a serious issue that really needs to be addressed.

I got the answer on the rent question.

And now if Swaathi would indulge me by putting up a sketch that I sent to her? And so there's the sketch. So I didn't like the interior layout of the typical apartments for a couple reasons.

I mean -- and I've drawn over the plan. You can see actually the bedrooms are all in the same place, the living rooms are in the same place, et cetera, et cetera.

But I introduced a privacy vestibule between the bedrooms and the living room. Now, this -- I've done thousands of units, and none of my clients would ever have permitted me to do what's drawn on the proposal, which is to have the bedrooms and the bathroom open directly off the living room with no sense of privacy.

So I was -- I thought, well, how do you make -- how does that work? How can you make that happen? And -- and I tried flipping the elevator so that the -- the amount of corridor space needed to connect the two stairs and the elevator, the apartment entrances is reduced.

And you can see from the left -- right next to the elevator on both sides currently there's a corridor there, which really makes the configuration of the kitchens and the

living rooms very awkward.

By flipping the elevator and putting the stairs exactly in the middle of the building, they're like a foot off the center of the building, giving that extra foot space to the upper units on the upper side of the plan, it seems to me that you might be able to solve the privacy issue, and you might get better units for the living rooms and kitchens in the lower units.

So since I think we really want you to go back and work on some of these issues, I'd like you to explore this. You know, it's your building, and if you do something that's lousy for renters, you know, you're still going to be able to rent it because of the way the market works, but, you know, why not make it better and -- so it's a suggestion that you look at this and explore if it's possible to create the privacy for the bedrooms and bathroom.

I'll just make one more comment on that. Supposing it's a roommate situation. Probably there will be a lot of roommates. So one roommate's entertaining in the living room, the other roommate is entertaining in the bedroom. This happens a lot with roommates. And, you know, it's like you don't want people from the bedroom to be

walking through the living room. This doesn't make sense.

Or supposing it's a -- you know, a family with a kid in one of those bedrooms. And you'd like to get more acoustical isolation so the kid can sleep while things are still going on with the adults in the living room area. I mean, that's the logic behind this. And it seems to me it makes the apartments much better if you can accomplish it.

These are quite small apartments. They're tight, the rooms are kind of small. You know, they're using every inch they can on the site, given the setbacks. And they're not -- they're not terrible, but they could be better.

So I think that is the end of my comments. Yeah, oh, I -- I just had a comment: I didn't notice where the existing tree was. It's in a terrible location. It's right in the -- apparently it would be right in the middle of the sidewalk. It's two feet from the building. It's -- you know, it's going to be heavily influenced by construction.

And so maybe you have to -- you know, we like to save trees, but will this tree actually survive, you know, in its present location, you know? Or do we say, "Oh no, you got to move the -- and make the building smaller to keep the tree." I think that's maybe not what we can do.

All right. So those are my comments.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Well, thank you very much. And thank you for all the extra time and effort that went into the drawing. It's very interesting and helpful.

Lou?

HUGH RUSSELL: Being retired, I've got time.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah, but you could have been doing other fun things. So thank you.

Lou?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Kind of along the lines of Hugh's comments and Catherine's: I don't think they're quite ready. I think they should toss this around a little bit. The renderings show this very dark gray against this lighter, cement material.

Maybe it's the renderings, but I don't know. It does seem to be too much contrast, and also, they're not being able to identify where their ventilation is going to be for the building is kind of troublesome. It could be in a horrible location.

The flood resilience problem: Another problem. Basically, I just don't think they're ready. I think they haven't changed anything, and they're using the same design,

and I don't think -- as Catherine said, there will be some changes, so I think they need to straighten out some of their issues and come back.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. And Ashley?

ASHLEY TAN: thank you. I also agree there needs to be things that need to be clarified, particularly -- you know, the percentage of floor area for affordable housing. Because that relief determines the relief and special permit that we need.

But I will say what I would like to continue seeing next time around, which is -- I -- it's pretty refreshing to see a building with few amenities, honestly. No frills.

I actually like the number of two-bedrooms versus I think we've been seeing a lot of studios, a lot of one-beds. This mix of two -- significant amount of two-beds and lack of amenities I think in some ways allows the building to continue to be relatively more affordable than if it were not. And so, I would like to see that continue.

And I also like the fact that the transformer vault is indoors. And so, if there is a way to have that better shielded, that would be nice. So thank you.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you. And Tom?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah. Thank you very much. And just quickly, I think the floodplain of course affects the details of the ground floor, which affect the public realm most dramatically, right, as we walk around this building?

We've commented on the screen on the transformer. So understanding those details and how the plans and entrances and exits will change when that factor is put into play is critical. So right to the top of the comments. I couldn't agree more with Catherine that we need to see this again. That needs to be looked at.

Maybe Hugh misunderstood me; I just wanted to understand the logic of the balconies. It's nice to get some relief in the geometry of the building. And I appreciate the kind of -- the way in which they work together. So I'm okay with the balconies.

Disagree with Hugh on the tree demolition. I think the building is changing its footprint. The sidewalk can be adjusted so that we can move around that tree. And I think it's worth doing an investigation to see whether we can save "my" tree -- it's a public tree -- with the creation of this project. I'd like you to look at that.

I would -- two other things: Lastly, more outreach to the neighbors. It seems like there's some hard feelings here. I know Mr. Hope -- Attorney Hope's pretty skilled in understanding how important those conversations are. And I think a continuation would allow for time and consideration of both the conversation with the tenants and the Elks Lodge.

And lastly, I guess I would want to understand. I would like a drawing between #12 Douglas and -- a section drawn between #12 Douglas and this building on it's 5' setback next to that sweet little white building that's there on the street. I don't understand what that relationship is. It looks pretty dramatic.

So thank you.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you very much. Ted?

H THEODORE COHEN: Yeah. Very briefly, I agree with pretty much everything my colleagues have said. Deferring on the issue about the tree, it is very close. And if it can be saved, great. If it can be saved and have a safe passageway for pedestrians, that would be great.

I think I agree with -- about the number of two-bedroom units. I think having more two bedrooms rather than

changing it so that there are more one-bedrooms would not be what I would favor. If there were more three bedrooms, that of course would be great, because getting three bedrooms is very difficult in new developments.

But if that -- if they don't want to change or can't change, I think the number of two-bedrooms are fine.

I agree the color scheme is somewhat off-putting and could be improved upon. And while I've heard the explanation about where the transformer room is and the screen, I still find the screen right on Bishop Allen Drive very unappealing.

And if something could be -- I don't know if it could be made smaller, if it can be designed differently so it's more attractive. But I just -- is -- from my point of view very unattractive right at the moment.

But I think -- you know, overall, you know, the issue of the floodplain -- floodplain elevation -- and I think also the stormwater, which has not been addressed, the Public Works I think asked us to not to grant a special permit until that was addressed -- all mandates that, you know, this be continued and come back, which I think would -- as others have mentioned, would give time to talk to some

of the abutters and impacted parties and especially at least some more conversations with the Elks, whose -- you know, objections or concerns I'm not fully aware of or fully understand at this point.

But it didn't sound like they were impossible to comply with or to -- anyway, so I think as others have said, this just has to come back.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah. Okay. Thank you. Well, I -- I'm in agreement that it should come back. There are a lot of unanswered questions, and some of them severely impact the design so -- or significantly impact it.

So we would need to see it again at some point, and better to do it as part of this process but not to start the whole thing over again.

When you are discussing the DPW issues with them, the whole issue of the tree is something that the proponent should address in those and have Public Works respond to whatever it is that you guys have agreed to? Because it is a tree on a public right of way. It's a public tree and it needs to go through a process.

And so, I think we're going to need to know that the Planning -- sorry, the Public Works have an opinion as

to whether or not the tree could be saved and relocated.

And if not, then, you know, what is their suggestion in terms of sequencing between public hearing on that and us issuing a special permit? Yeah. And public process.

I think -- I'm not going to go into any more detail, because my colleagues have, I think outlined very clearly things that we need to see, and certainly, there's a lot of detail in the planning, or the Community Development Department Memo. So we can use that for reference as well.

So do Board members have any last bits of information that they would want to ask of the applicant? Okay, and Daniel and Staff, did you have anything else you wanted to add?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: I don't, Chair Flynn, but I'll just give a moment for Mason Wells, who is our Zoning Project Manager and Erik Thorkildsen from Community Planning if they had anything they wanted to add?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Nothing to add from me, Daniel. Thank you, everyone.

SEAN HOPE: And not from me either. Thanks. I appreciate the discussion.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So I'm assuming, then, that we'll continue the hearing until the requested -- until after the requested information has been provided to Staff. So Staff will get the information to be able to review it and be sure that you've addressed all of the concerns that have been discussed tonight, and then we'll schedule the hearing at the point.

Is the applicant agreeable to that approach to rescheduling?

SEAN HOPE: Yes, Madam Chair. And I apologize my camera is off. My --

MARY FLYNN: Yeah.

SEAN HOPE: -- the wireless reception isn't great. But yes, we would gladly like an opportunity to clarify some of the issues you mentioned as well as talk to the Elks and potentially the tenants, so that we can really focus on the design and not anything else.

MARY FLYNN: All right. So then is there a motion to continue the hearing as we have discussed this evening?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: So moved.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Second.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Daniel, could we have a roll

call vote, please?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou Bacci?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: H Theodore Cohen?

H THEODORE COHEN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

[All vote YES]

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in favor.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you very much and thank you to the applicant team. We appreciate the effort you made today but look forward to more robust discussion as we

continue with this project.

Thank you.

* * * * *

(7:33 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: The next item on the agenda is a public hearing on case PB-397, a special permit application by Nelson Group Companies to redevelop and expand an existing structure at 2161 Massachusetts Avenue.

We will begin with an Update from CDD Staff. Then we will hear a presentation from the applicant followed by public comment. And then the Board will discuss the application.

Our action this evening is to grant or deny the special permit request, or we could ask for additional information and continue the hearing to a future date.

Before we begin, I just want to note that Ted has recused himself from this case. So we need to note for the record that there are only six Planning Board members in attendance for this hearing. Is the applicant prepared to

proceed with these six members present?

JAMES RAFFERTY: Good evening, Madam Chair. For the record, James Rafferty on behalf of the applicant. We were informed of this situation earlier in the week, and the applicant is comfortable going forward with fewer than the full complement.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you very much, Mr. Rafferty. We appreciate that.

So I'm now going to turn it over to CDD Staff, who will explain why this matter is before us.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. Daniel Messplay again. So this is a new application for a special permit in the Mass. Ave. Overlay District.

The applicant is proposing to relocate an existing building on the lot closer to Mass. Ave. and construct an addition along its right side. The building will consist of eight residential units and a ground-floor office space fronting on Mass. Ave. with seven parking spaces behind the building.

DPW Staff, Zoning Staff and Urban Design Staff have all prepared memos on the project for the Board's consideration. And Staff from Zoning and Urban Design are

present to answer any questions the Board may have.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thanks, Daniel. Attorney James Rafferty is representing the applicant. Mr. Rafferty, you have up to 30 minutes to present, but hope you will be as concise as possible. We can allow additional time at the Board's discretion if needed.

So if you can please begin by introducing yourself yet again, and any other team members who are present. Please begin.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Thank you, Madam Chair. For the record, my name is James Rafferty. I'm an attorney with offices located at 907 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. I'm appearing on behalf of the applicant, the Nelson Group.

Present this evening is the Principal of the Nelson Group, Nelson Oliveira. And also present is the Project Architect, Nerijus Bubnelis.

The project involves the conversion and expansion of the building on Massachusetts Avenue at the corner of Wilson Street in North Cambridge.

The site is located in the North Mass. Ave. Overlay District, and it is actually a site that is identified in this portion of the zoning as having historic

value. That you'll see in the application has some relevance in terms of the design criteria in the Mass. Ave. Overlay District.

The Mass. Ave. Overlay District imposes requirements for commercial uses on the ground floor of structures along Massachusetts Avenue. It does, however, provide allowances or exceptions for historic buildings or buildings containing historic value.

As I noted, this particular lot by its address is included in this section of the ordinance as one of many structures containing such significance.

The building is an example of 1930s Art Moderne architect. We learned a lot about it through our dealing with the Cambridge Historical Commission. We are looking to bring the building forward on the lot, and the architect will go through the details of that.

But in order to do so, we -- it was necessary for us to obtain approval of -- or a demolition approval from the historic Commission, notwithstanding the fact it really isn't a demolition per se, but the Demolition Delay Ordinance relocation treats relocation of a structure on the same lot as subject to the ordinance and requiring approval.

Around the time we sought approval to bring the building forward, there was a Citizen Petition filed to the landmark this building. So the Commission held contemporaneous hearings on our request and the landmark petition.

Suffice it to say that at the conclusion, the Board found the building to be significant, but not preferably preserved, thus allowing it to be brought forward.

It also declined to landmark the building, and in doing so, it concluded that what was occurring here was a thoughtful reuse of the building, which was preserving many of its significant architectural features. So that alone allowed us to proceed with this project.

The project as proposed is -- will contain eight residential units and one commercial unit on the ground-floor facing Massachusetts Avenue.

The project is also proposed to contain seven parking spaces. And the parking spaces -- at the time we started out on the project, we were anticipating filing a special permit application for a reduction in one parking space. But as the Board is well aware, the ordinance was

subsequently amended, and that special permit is not necessary.

But parking to unit ratio is very close to 1:1. And candidly, we had extensive discussions. We had two meetings with neighbors. And parking was a primary concern.

So moving the building forward allows the site the opportunity to create the on-site parking, those seven spaces that are depicted here.

The special permit provision in the Mass. Ave. Overlay District allows the Board to increase the base FAR here in the Business A-2 district to 1.75. We're proposing a building with an FAR of 1.35.

So we are seeking a special permit in order to get that increase, but we also recognize that one of the criteria in the Overlay District language is buildings of a scale and context of their surrounding site. So it is not a building that overwhelms the site.

And the additions, you'll see, to the building are really just occurring about half of the top floor and the side -- this side of the building.

So at this point, with the Board's indulgence, we'd ask that the Project Architect be permitted to walk the

Board through the presentation this evening.

MARY FLYNN: That would be great. Thank you.

NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Hello. Can you hear me?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Okay. Good evening, and welcome Madam Chair and members of the Planning Board. First, for the record, Nerijus Bubnelis from Khalsa design in Somerville. I was wondering if I can share my screen. I think it will be easier for the presentation, if it's possible. Thank you very much.

Okay. Can you see?

MARY FLYNN: Yes, we can.

NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Great. Thank you. So I'll start with existing conditions, existing conditions plan. Let's see. Let me get together that. Okay.

So as mentioned before, the lot contains historically identified structure, which is a 1939 Art Moderne building with a local architect, William Galvin. The building itself had some additions in the past. It was -- you know, something was added on the left door on the back of Mass. Avenue in, like, 1959.

And currently, the building is sort of set back

off Mass. Avenue like about 22 feet, and -- but almost 11 feet from Milton Street. And it currently contains office -- it's an office building currently, and the office of American Friends Service Committee.

So what we are proposing -- there are a couple things that are going to happen to the building: First, the building will be moved towards the Mass. Avenue towards Milton Street. So it's approximately 5' and 8" towards the Milton Street and 22.9" towards Massachusetts Avenue.

Then we're going to demolish the back of it approximately 7 feet, and -- of the existing structure and we're going to add an addition on the right side, which will be our commercial space with a first floor and upper floor as well as containing the basement.

What we see here, so once we move the building, that allows us to add seven parking spaces with keeping the existing curb cut.

The parking will be permeable pavers as well as that will allow us to contain the stormwater extension chambers for the runoff mitigation, as well as we're going to have a ramp accessibility of the residential units at the residential entry on the Milton Street. It's going to be a

small ramp since that floor is approximately a foot above the average grade.

And the commercial addition will be at grade for accessibility reasons.

We also propose bike parking -- bike parking in -- I'm trying to zoom in -- so it's bike lockers. We'll have eight bike lockers, regular size, and one -- one larger size locker.

As well, we're going to have a trash area in the back towards the parking. And we're going to have short-term bike areas for commercial spaces and for residential spaces.

Then -- sorry, just one second. We're going to go to the landscape plan. I wanted to mention that we have a landscape architect from Verdant, Katya Podsiadlo, in attendance, as well as we have a Civil Engineer, Anthony Esposito, here, so if you have more questions about that, we're going to -- if you will allow them to speak that would be great.

So the first one is the landscape plan, where in this plan we show sort of existing trees to be preserved along the property on the back as well as a street tree.

And we are preserving the magnolia tree, which will be in the corner of Milton Street and Massachusetts Avenue.

Owner -- neighborhood, everybody wanted to preserve the tree, and to be sure that this -- the impact of moving the building to make sure that this tree is preserved, the owner contracted the -- contracted the -- the certified arborist, Stevan B. Gold to create a cheap protection plan, which will also include the direction how to prune the magnolia tree to allow the construction, prune the interior of the tree, remove that wood, and maintain the tree so it will continue growing, and protective measures for the magnolia tree during construction, as well as additional measures to support and promote vitality of the tree.

Then, this is the hardscape plan, where we show the sort of type of pavers, and then what was the vision of the parking area, as well -- again, it's pervious pavers, so it will help to mitigate the stormwater.

Then we can -- we move into the architecture, where we have the slide shows, sort of the massing and elements that will be replaced or added to the existing structure, which is currently shown in grey and then we're

going to be replacing windows to match the original architect design -- windows and doors, as well as the addition in the back.

Just a short slide showing how much of the existing historic structure will be demolished. It sits in the back. It's about seven feet, which was not the original building, and we went to the Historical Commission, and it looked like they were in favor of this design.

Quickly: Floor plans and the building program, it's -- it's eight units, it's a one bed -- it will have two one-bedroom and one-bathroom units.

We have 4 two-bedroom and one-bath and then 2 two-beds and two-bath. One bedroom unit's about 680 square feet and an average two-bed is about 780, two-beds, one-bath. And then 2 -- you know, 935 and 1007 square feet two-bedroom, two-bathroom units.

Quickly, just to orient: This plan shows Milton on the bottom -- Milton Street on the bottom; Mass. Ave. on the right. So basement will be unoccupied. Basement mostly on the relocated building.

And we will have commercial space basement, and the commercial space on the first floor, with the separate

entrance from Massachusetts Avenue.

The first floor on the residential side will have a mail area corridor -- two units on the first floor, single-stair, three-storied structure.

And then four units on the second floor and two units at the top floor.

And next we present the rendering, which I'd like to point out that magnolia tree that we're trying to present (sic) it's not shown in this particular rendering. You know, we wanted to show the building itself more in this rendering. But the magnolia tree will be preserved.

So quickly, why we came up with -- and how did we come up with this design: It's an Art Moderne. The elements of Art Moderne are, like, you know, simple geometry, compact cubic -- you know, massing with limited and almost no degration (sic) and long horizon lines like streamlines, and occasional with nautical elements like from machine-age architecture, corner windows, porthole windows, glass block or multipaned windows, and then -- you know, smooth, wide walls. That's kind of like elements of that style.

And if we look at the addition, that's what we

were trying to follow, that element -- horizon line, corner windows, you know, smooth -- smooth -- smooth -- smooth façade, smooth materials. In this case, we're just kind of carrying the materials from the existing structure, which will be a full brick.

Then we're introducing this -- like porthole windows, introducing the curved canopy above the commercial entrance.

We also -- I want to talk about the roof. So the existing building roof is -- it's a hipped roof, which is not typical for the type of architecture. But that's the building it is we're dealing with.

And the original drawings they actually bought for us showed shingled roofing. In this case, we wanted to blend in the addition to the existing building and we chose to sort of like change the material from asphalt shingles to more sort of -- if you will -- machine architect -- machine-age material, which would also be easier for us to find the siding for the addition, since the addition we're proposing is a -- you know, Art Moderne flat roof addition.

And -- and that's probably will be it for the presentation. And I guess we're going to -- we can jump

into questions and comments, unless somebody else wants to add something?

JAMES RAFFERTY: I think we're good on our end, Nerijus, at this moment. But, as noted, we do have engineers available for questioning.

MARY FLYNN: Great. Thank you very much for that. I think now we'll move to public comment, and then we'll get to Board questions and discussion. So any members of the public who wish to speak should now click the button that says, "Raise hand." If you're calling in by phone, you can raise your hand by pressing *9.

As of 5:00 p.m. yesterday, the Board had received no written communications on this case. Additional written communications received after 5:00 p.m. yesterday will be entered into the record.

And let's see. We do have a few people who are interested in speaking. So I'll now ask Staff to unmute speakers one at a time. Please begin by saying your name and address and Staff can confirm that we can hear you. After that, you'll have up to three minutes to speak before I ask you to wrap up.

So Daniel, let me turn it over to you, please.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. It looks like our first speaker is -- I apologize for the pronunciation -- Katya Podsiadlo followed by Anne Randolph. Katya, please begin by giving your name and address.

KATYA PODSIADLO: Hi. So I'm actually the landscape architect on the project. I had raised my hand in case I wanted -- needed to be made panelist. So I'm here just to answer questions about the landscape if anything comes up. Thank you.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. We will promote you to panelist. So the next speaker is Anne Rudolph (sic), followed by Andrea Cazeau. Anne, please begin by giving your name and address.

ANNE RANDOLPH: Hi. I'm Anne Randolph. I am -- my address is 10 Milton Street. I am the nearest neighbor to the project. And I am -- you know, I'm naturally concerned at what has always been an office building turning into eight next-door neighbors. But it does seem as though that's down from nine next-door neighbors, which is what it was last time I heard about it.

I am concerned about the magnolia tree. I -- it's very hard for me to imagine that there's room for it once

you've moved the building in both directions.

That building moves closer to Milton Street as well as substantially closer to Mass. Ave. And that magnolia tree fills up the space that's there already. So I understand there's been an arborist, but I'm -- I really am troubled about that.

And -- and troubled about setbacks. Like, it's -- it's a very, very close-to-the-sidewalk project. It's -- I don't know. It's hard for me to imagine that there's going to be in the tiny little bit of space between the building and Milton Street any substantial landscaping.

And yeah. I -- I'm interested in open green space, and I'm interested in the protection of, you know, sort of the canopy in Cambridge. So -- so that.

I guess that's all I have to say.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. The next speaker is Andrea Cazeau, followed by Dan Sullivan. Andrea, you can begin by unmuting yourself and giving your name and address.

JUDY CAZEAU: Hello. My name is Judy. I'm actually Andrea's daughter. We're watching this together. So we live at 5 Milton Street, which is directly across facing the property. I just had a few questions.

So my parents, they -- they have installed solar panels on the house. And if I -- if I understand this correctly, the property is going up a few levels higher, right? How will this affect us as the neighboring tenants, or the neighboring landlords for our property? Will it affect us and, you know, what we have going on with solar?

And then you may have already answered this: Can you just give a little more about, like, parking and did you say that the space will also have a retail space at the bottom, and who is the developer?

MARY FLYNN: I'm just -- so you can pose the questions. We will ask the proponent to answer them when we get to Board discussion if you have questions. So if there are other questions, please ask those. And if not, if you have comments add those, and then we'll be happy to hear them.

JUDY CAZEAU: Oh, so they don't answer your questions?

UNIDENTIFIED: [Indiscernible].

JUDY CAZEAU: Oh, okay. Sorry.

UNIDENTIFIED: It's not a deal.

MARY FLYNN: Did you have other questions or

comments that you wanted to make?

JUDY CAZEAU: Oh, no. The only questions I had were my concerns for my parents as far as like the solar panels.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah.

JUDY CAZEAU: And --

MARY FLYNN: The solar panels, the parking and the retail space?

JUDY CAZEAU: Yeah.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah. Come from office -- Mm-hm.

JUDY CAZEAU: And what are we -- what are we -- what are we thinking as far as, like, for retail and -- yeah, just kind of wanted to understand the framework of that.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. We will ask those questions when we get to the Board discussion. Thank you.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: The next speaker is Dan Sullivan. And we'll just quickly do a last call if anyone wishes to speak on 2161 Mass. Ave. So please use the Raise Hand function.

Dan, you can go ahead and give your name and address.

DAN SULLIVAN: Can you hear me?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes.

DAN SULLIVAN: Okay, good. Dan Sullivan. I live at 12 Milton Street. And I have a couple of issues. Obviously, parking is still an issue -- now the street has a narrow little street parking on one side, and it is going to be worse, especially if the parking spaces on Mass. Ave. disappear. So that's always been an issue. It probably always will be an issue.

And I'm glad to see that the magnolia tree is being preserved, hopefully in its current size and state.

The thing that bothers -- concerns me most, now I'm not a structural engineer, but it just concerns me that here's this lovely old brick building, which is going to be moved.

What happens if there is structural damage to the building during its moving -- i.e., a brick wall collapses or something like that? Is there guarantees? Are there guarantees one way or another -- financial, in writing, whatever? That the building will be restored to its original shape?

I mean, as I say, I'm not a structural engineer.

I have no idea. I'm impressed that buildings can get moved around a lot. However, they can also be damaged. And that's the main worry I have; that the thing will -- will sustain some structural damage, which then makes the building not worth saving. And all of a sudden, a whole new structure can go up.

That's my major concern. And I'm -- other than that, I'm perfectly happy with the building and the projected plan. I think it's good. But I still worry about the structural damage to the building and what the consequences would be.

Okay, that's all.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you. Chair Flynn, that concludes the speakers on the list. So I will turn it back to you.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you very much. So we're now going to move onto Board questions and discussion. And as with the previous case, we have memos from both CDD Staff and the DPW. So in addition to the questions that we heard from the public, do Board members have any questions of the proponent at this time?

I'm not seeing any. Just want to make sure.

Okay. I just have one question. And I guess it does relate to the office space. Just to clarify, it's not retail; it's going to be an office tenant in the addition? Perhaps you can clarify what the status is of the current occupants of the building, and if they are going to be included in this new project or if you will be seeking new tenants.

But if you could answer that, and do you want me to run through the questions again, or did you happen to take notes?

JAMES RAFFERTY: I did take notes.

MARY FLYNN: Okay.

JAMES RAFFERTY: So I'm happy to address those --

MARY FLYNN: Thank you.

JAMES RAFFERTY: -- questions.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Also, the developer is present this evening. To my understanding, I believe, that there was no occupants in the building, and there haven't been for a while. But --

MARY FLYNN: Okay.

JAMES RAFFERTY: But I may be wrong. So maybe we should begin by having Nelson identify himself and explain current status of the building in terms of tenancies.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Great.

NELSON DEOLIVEIRA: My name is Nelson DeOliveira with the Nelson Group. The building is currently vacant since 2020, when we acquired the building.

JEFF ROBERTS:

MARY FLYNN: Okay.

JAMES RAFFERTY: And Madam Chair, it is envisioned as office space, just given its location and the challenge of a stand-alone retail store in that location.

MARY FLYNN: Yep.

JAMES RAFFERTY: That's not to say that -- if the market produced a retail tenant, it is an allowed use, but I think it's highly unlikely. What Mr. DeOliveira anticipates is at 900 -- approximately 950 square feet, this would lend itself to a good-sized office for maybe an accountant, professional bookkeeper, architect, that type of thing.

But the office space is there because of the requirements involving ground-floor commercial activity in the Mass. Ave. Overlay District. So it's an attempt to address that.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you for that.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Do you want me to go through the

questions, the three --

MARY FLYNN: If you would.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Okay. So Ms. Randolph expressed concern for the magnolia tree, and as noted, that is a high priority for the project. The arborist has submitted material involving a tree protection plan. We're happy to have that be made a part of the record, and a condition of any determination here. But it is very much a priority.

That was certainly the developer's thinking going into the project. It was only affirmed in the conversations we had with neighbors.

Ms. Randolph also noted concern about the setbacks of -- just note that the building, the entire portion of the building now is going to be in the Business District. And these setbacks are the allowed setbacks in the Business District. We are not seeking any relief on setbacks.

The owners at 5 Milton Street asked questions about the additional height of the building and how it might impact their solar installation. The increase is only one level. It's on the far side of the building.

We did include a shadow study in the application, and you can see that no shadow comes across Milton Street.

In fact, no shadow leaves beyond the lot itself. So I think it's safe to say that that would be minimal. But certainly happy to meet with that property owner, and, you know, confirm specific details about their solar array that we could work with.

And then, finally, Mr. Sullivan of 12 Milton Street asked about the structural impact on the building, if it were being moved. And I'm not qualified to speak at length about it, other than to say that such relocations occur somewhat regularly. They will be regulated by the Historical Commission in the demolition process.

The applicant does have to take necessary steps to preserve it, but once again, as to specifics of relocating, I know there's experienced professionals on the Board that might want to add to that, but I also could have Nelson address the specifics of relocating the building.

But I think a move, here, is all within one lot, and not that big a structure, as I'm told.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. I don't know that much about it myself, but I'm sure as you said the architects on the Board probably do have some sense. So if they have concerns, they'll tell us.

There -- so there's the issue of the parking lot and the fact -- it was noted in the CDD memo that it does not comply with the dimensional requirements. So does that mean that you need to get a separate variance for that, or is that just something that needs to be included in the special permit?

JAMES RAFFERTY: Well, yeah. That provision of Article 6 allows those conditions to be weighed by special permit. You know, it's -- we'll obviously follow CDD's guidance, but the fact that we don't have parking requirements any longer, my understanding is that if you are going to provide parking, you still need to comply with the parking requirements.

And so to that extent, I did notice that in the application -- in the CDD comment, so we would seek to get the special permit to allow the 10-foot setback off the building is the one that would be quite impactful in terms of shrinking the size of the parking.

There are -- there is a unit that has a few windows on that floor level, but a special permit mechanism would allow those spaces to remain in place.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. And I understand that parking

was brought up not only this evening but also in some of your community meetings that the neighbors were interested in seeing some parking on the site.

Hugh, did you have a question or a comment?

HUGH RUSSELL: I had a question.

MARY FLYNN: Okay.

HUGH RUSSELL: What was the original material and color of the hip roof?

NERIJUS BUBNELIS: Nerijus Bubnelis from Khalsa. We do not -- we don't know the color of the original building. We don't have pictures. We only have the hand drawings, which indicates asphalt shingles. This is the material we got from the Historic Commission. But we don't have colored renderings or anything like that.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Before we move on to comments, any other questions from Board members? Yeah. Okay. Well, then let's turn to our comments. And, you know, if other questions come up as we move forward, we can certainly raise those. So who would like to begin?

Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: I'll just follow up on my question. The existing color according to your photographs is much

lighter than the color you're proposing. And in my opinion, the color you're proposing is kind of too dark and too robust, and maybe a lighter color would be desirable.

I'm also looking at the photographs of the magnolia tree and finding it hard to believe that it won't need to be very substantially pruned. That's a pretty large magnolia tree, and I don't see how it fits, myself.

Aside from that, it's a fine project.

MARY FLYNN: Great. Other comments? Tom?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Well, just quickly to the concern that was raised about the loss of the building, or the risk of the building falling apart when it's moved. Actually, this is a relatively small building to move, compared to my experience, and there is a fair amount of technology around to move a building like this.

But my understanding is that the permits are contingent on the -- there's a preservation component to it there. And I think there's some teeth in that.

You know, should -- there is risk when you move buildings, and should the fabric decay or be damaged in the move, I think it's incumbent on the petitioner to put it back together, because the permits are swinging on the fact

that there's a preservation aspect, as evidenced by the process they went through with the Historic Commission.

So to the extent that it assures a good neighbor, I think that's where I come out on that. I'm not overly concerned, because it's a smaller building.

The color -- Hugh raised the color. I was puzzled by the renderings, because I remember the building at least in my memory as being kind of yellowish, and the renderings show it as gray. And so, I assumed that these weren't renderings so much as kind of cartoons.

And so once I was assured that -- I don't think the building's getting painted, you know, that was a preservation strategy, then the whole thing sort of came together or I understood how this composition worked. And I very much appreciate it.

My first impression was that I didn't understand what was going on here at all. But once I -- "oh, that's the building that's there," moving forward, I think that the heroics there to do that make sense.

I think it makes Mass. Ave. better. You know, it accommodates the parking, which is a concern of the neighbors and adaptively reuses this building providing

housing in a community that desperately needs it.

So there are a lot of components here that I really appreciate. And I think in the end that the architectural composition despite the renderings once I looked at the it in elevation comes together quite well. So I'm in favor.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. Lou?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yeah. Pretty much wiped the whole concept: reusing this building moving it to a different location so that it will add some further use to the site.

My only question -- and I guess I could throw this to the architects -- is the color of the addition, especially a third-floor section, seems to make this thing very heavy. It looks better from I guess the office side of the building and it's kind of striped and it makes sense.

But from the corner, it just seems to be a lot of roof. It just seems to make it very heavy. Would a lighter color help there? I mean, I know it would mess up the patterning the on the other side.

But I don't know, it just seems to -- it seems kind of odd to have such a dark façade above the actual

roofline. But that -- that's my only comment, and it's -- with the split buildings, it's kind of a funny combination. But other than that, saving the tree and adding the parking to help the neighborhood, I think it's a great project.

MARY FLYNN: Okay, thank you. Catherine?

[Pause]

Oh, I can't -- we can't hear you. Catherine, you're still muted. There you go.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: I was hitting it too many times. Sorry about that. In general, I really like a lot of things about this project. I am concerned about the parking area not meeting setback requirements.

MARY FLYNN: Where did you go? Did Catherine just disappear, or am I missing something?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Chair Flynn, it does look like we maybe lost Catherine from the meeting.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Okay. So she'll come back, I'm sure. So let's move on to Ashley for the time being.

ASHLEY TAN: Thank you. I can pick up what I think Cahterine was trying to say. I also wanted either, you know for the record or for clarity, I know Attorney

Rafferty mentioned that by special permit we could waive potentially the setbacks for the parking.

I don't quite see that, but if either Daniel or Attorney Rafferty can provide us where that's written, you know, so that we can have it, that would be great. Otherwise, I do have the same concern as Catherine.

My other little point is I love the project, I love the reuse, but I'd love to see the transformer and the long-term biking little cubicle somewhat screened if possible.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. Daniel, could you give us guidance on this, on the parking situation?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Certainly. Thank you, Chair Flynn. And I think Attorney Rafferty was referring to in Article 6 there's a section 6.441g that allows a special permit to be granted to modify some of the setback requirements for on-grade parking facilities.

I will say I -- you know, I hear sort of the consensus from the Board -- not to speak for the Board, but it sounds like, you know, the Board is supportive of the project and would like to see it move forward.

And if this is an item that is potentially holding

us up, I don't know if the Board could grant an additional special permit that was not part of the legal notice for this application at this time.

So what I would perhaps recommend to the Board and would also like to hear from Attorney Rafferty on his thoughts is perhaps we could word the approval condition so that this parking layout and design is a part of the continuing Design Review with Staff so we can work with the applicant and their design team to see if we can bring the design of the parking layout into Zoning compliance.

And only if the parking layout would substantially change the site development plan or that waiver would in fact be required, we could come back to the Board for that specific request.

But otherwise, I would perhaps recommend that we -- you know, just work sort of offline with the applicant and their design team to try to come up with a solution that meets the Zoning requirements but does not fundamentally change the proposed design of the site.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So just to be sure that I understand: The idea would be if the Board did give approval tonight, that the parking lot would be continued --

subject to continuing Design Review, to see if we can get it into compliance. And if you do, fantastic. If you don't then you would have to come back to the Board with a -- just on that particular issue with a different hearing. Is that correct?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's correct. It would either be because the layout of the new parking, you know, would substantially change the design of the site enough that it would warrant a new look by the Board or that Waiver Request we would need to come back for specifically.

But that would be my recommendation, just so that, you know, this isn't an item that's holding the project up from being able to move along but would like to hear perhaps from the applicant and the representative if that sounds like -- I mean maybe a way to thread the needle here.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah, okay. Before we go over to the applicant, Hugh, did you have a comment on the parking situation?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes. It's my understanding that to come into compliance, a 40'-wide parking lot would have to be reduced to 30' wide. And then the aisle widths simply wouldn't work unless you only allowed people who had, you

know, microcars come there.

So I think we should -- so I don't think there's much chance that you can redesign it and make it compliant. So I think we need to work on a strategy that allows us to grant that at the appropriate time and the appropriate notice, perhaps as an amendment to the whatever.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So Catherine is coming back. Catherine, can you hear us?

[Pause]

Okay. We can't hear you. You're still muted.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: How about now?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Amazing.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Yes.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: I apologize. I do not -- I'm hoping I don't have a very expensive computer problem to deal with.

MARY FLYNN: Oh, I hope you don't.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: But I did want to join if I could.

MARY FLYNN: Yes. Well, we're glad that you're back. We're talking about the parking situation.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

MARY FLYNN: And Ashley kind of followed up where you were headed to talk about concern about the setback, et cetera.

And Daniel tried to clarify that because it hasn't been specifically cited in the notice or for this evening's special permit here, that perhaps the best way to try to do this would be to try to redesign the parking lot so that it would meet the Standards.

And if they weren't able to do that, then to come back to the Board with a separate request or however we have to handle that legally.

And Hugh then added that, you know, based on his calculations on what is required by parking, that we would be substantially reducing the number of spaces. And he doesn't think the problem can be solved for the number of spaces that are being requested.

So right now, we're trying to figure out how to proceed.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Well, I appreciate the recap. And I -- again, my apologies for the technical difficulties. I would -- I agree with everything you just

recapped in terms of I don't think it can -- the number of spaces can be accommodated on the lot and meet requirements.

I would be personally more interested in meeting the setback requirements than having the same number of spaces on the lot. But Board members might differ on that.

I see more value in protecting the health and well-begin of the residents from exhaust and the impacts of having a vehicle parked that close to your house than I do to making sure that there's off-street parking for this number of units, especially where, as has been previously noted, we no longer require -- have a minimum number of parking spaces required.

So I guess for my part, I would be -- I'd prefer to see this project come back with either -- with compliant parking lot design or alternatively, if it can't -- if there's some reason not to be done -- handled that way, I'd like to see what attempts that could be made to do it -- why we need this many spaces, and a request for the appropriate relief.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Any other thoughts from the Board members? Does anybody disagree with that approach? Daniel, does that solve the issue? I guess it -- well, it

gives us a chance to come back with a parking lot that meets the requirements, the dimensional requirements.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Certainly, Chair Flynn. Yeah. If the hearing were to be continued, then we could work with the applicant to figure out, you know, if -- what exactly does come back to the Board.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. Is there anybody who disagrees with that approach, or wants to?

No, okay. I think we're good there. All right. So I think where we are, then, is that in general, the Board's very supportive of the project. We love the idea of, you know, housing.

We do have some concerns -- obviously the parking situation that we just talked about, and the preservation of the magnolia tree. And I appreciate the fact that you said you would include the protection plan as part of the record, Attorney Rafferty.

So that would be helpful for Staff to be able to review that. I don't know whether it would be CDD Staff or DPW, but I think as long as we're going to ask you to come back, we might as well take a look at that too, because that seems to be a sort of neighborhood concern as well as a

Board concern.

Anything else that Board members would like the proponents to look at before they come back to us?

[Pause]

Okay.

I'm not seeing anything, then. So then --

SWAATHI JOSEPH: Hugh has his hand up.

MARY FLYNN: Oh, thank you for noting that since I hadn't. Yes, Hugh.

HUGH RUSSELL: I would like to see some alternatives of the colors.

MARY FLYNN: Oh. Yeah. Okay. That would be good. Yeah, both for roof as well as the other materials?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yeah.

MARY FLYNN: Yeah. And I know Erik in his memo expressed concern about the ability to be able to match the brick color. So if there's any information that the applicant has in regards to the feasibility of that, that would be helpful.

So are we comfortable that when the information we've asked for is provided to Staff, then we will schedule the hearing and appropriate notice will be provided; is that

acceptable to the applicant?

JAMES RAFFERTY: It's certainly acceptable to the applicant. And I'm having direction on the items that you'd like to see addressed is very helpful.

I share Mr. Russell's assessment that the tradeoff here: Meeting setbacks and maintaining the proposed supply aren't possible. So we know that from our own work. But we will happily file a -- probably an amended application in time for the return, so that the relevant section of the ordinance can be in play at the time of the next hearing.

If I could be permitted a point of personal privilege, because there's one person here -- not here tonight -- that was very instrumental in this project, and it's someone the Board knew: Jai Singh Khalsa was the architect on this project for many years. Jai passed away, back in late 2022, and he was an architect who spent a lot of time before this Board.

And candidly, this project was originally intended to be a demolition of this building and build an as-of-right project. And when we met with Mr. Sullivan, he really emphasized the importance of the building.

And it was Jai's idea to bring it forward, as he

always could make some accommodations, not overreact, figure a way out.

And I smiled when Mr. Russell complemented the design, because Jai and I would always discuss one of the greatest complements he ever received at the Planning Board came from Mr. Russell when he characterized one of Mr. Khalsa's ideas on a project down on Broadway designed was fiendishly clever.

And I used to always chuckle with Jai -- I said, "Boy, what a compliment that is." I said -- I'm not sure what was intended, but "fiendishly clever" was a term we used to joke about for many years after it was uttered by Mr. Russell.

So I'm -- I'm pleased that the design and the concept has been as well received by the Board, and it's a tribute to Jai and all his work. I know his colleagues continue on at the firm. He had many projects before this Board and was really a wonderful man.

So his loss is deeply felt, and I just wanted to share that with all the Board.

MARY FLYNN: Well, thank you so much for that. We're very sorry for your loss, as well as the City's

because it sounds like he has been a great contributor to the life of our city. And yeah, it was very nice of you to mention that.

So I think we are at a point, then, where we can agree to grant the extension. And a new hearing will be scheduled once the information has been received. So could I have a motion to that effect?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: So moved.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Tom. Is there a second?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: So moved.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Lou. All right. Daniel, may we have a roll call vote, please?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou Bacci?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

[All vote YES]

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That's all members voting in favor.

MARY FLYNN: Very good.

JAMES RAFFERTY: Thank you very much. We look forward to returning.

MARY FLYNN: Excellent.

COLLECTIVE: Thank you very much.

MARY FLYNN: We appreciate the presentation and the good work. Thank you.

Okay. We have a little bit more business to do.

* * * * *

(8:59 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: The next item on our agenda is a Use Determination for case PB-141, a previously approved Planned Unit Development known as Cambridge Research Park or Canal

District, Kendall. And CDD Staff will provide an update on why this is before us.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Thank you, Chair Flynn. This PUD special permit was granted in 1999. All of the buildings have since been completed. The proposal before you involves locating a quick service food establishment in the space previously occupied by a similar establishment called, "Mother Juice."

The special permit does not explicitly authorize quick service food establishments, but the special permit and the zoning allow the Planning Board to approve other uses upon written determination by the Planning Board.

We did not prepare a memo forth request, but Zoning and Urban Design Staff are present, and Urban Design Staff are present and can answer any questions the Board may have.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. And we're going to have a presentation on this by Vanessa Kazadi. Ms. Kazadi, if you would just introduce the members of your team who are present and begin?

VANESSA KAZADI: Hi everyone. My name is Vanessa. My husband and I, Sylvestre, we own Beraka Juice. It is a

great local juice bar located in Wakefield, and the pop-up juice bar serving the areas of Boston. We make organic, cold-pressed juices, smoothies, acai bowls, plants as toast, a lot of healthy options.

We opened right in the middle of the pandemic in 2020, but with the local support, our family support, the grace of God, we have made it through, and now the business has grown to a point where an expansion has come into play, and that would be at 675 West Kendall Street.

We plan to create a welcoming atmosphere in that space that is for a product that we are serving. We got experience. The previous tenant, Mother Juice, had a similar operation to ours. So the space -- we're kind of using the space in the store to start to produce and to serve our products to the community.

I can share my screen just to show you what we have for the exterior and the interior proposal. If you can see this screen here, so pretty much nothing will be changed inside, nor outside.

Currently, the space is empty, but we'll be adding chairs a maximum of 10 sitting. We'll be also adding equipment to the back, to the front that is to make our

product.

So moving onto the exterior proposal, I don't know if you can see it here? So nothing will be changed here as well. We're just adding -- we just plan on adding our logo as well as the names of the different products that we'll be serving. So that's pretty much who we are and what we do.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Thank you. Do members of the Board have any questions for either the proponent or for Staff?

[Pause]

I'm not seeing any. Just want to be sure I can see everyone. Okay. So no questions. Does anyone have objections or concerns? Okay. I see none. So could I have -- well, Daniel I assume I need a motion on this, correct?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Yes, Chair Flynn.

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Okay.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: It would be a motion to make a determination that the use is consistent with the objectives of the PUD KS District and the policies and guidelines set forth in the Eastern Cambridge Plan.

MARY FLYNN: Beautiful. All right. So Daniel has just phrased that beautifully. So can I have a motion to

make that -- a motion to that effect?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yeah. I couldn't have said it better. I move. I move the motion.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you very much. Is there a second?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Second.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you, Lou. All right. Daniel, roll call, please?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: On that motion, Lou Bacci?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

[All vote YES]

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That is all members voting in

favor.

MARY FLYNN: Wonderful. Well, thank you for your presentation and good luck with the business.

VANESSA KAZADI: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

MARY FLYNN: Very good. Goodnight.

* * * * *

(9:05 p.m.)

Sitting Members: Mary T. Flynn, Catherine Preston Connolly, Louis J. Bacci, Jr., Hugh Russell, Tom Sieniewicz, and Ashley Tan

MARY FLYNN: All right. And Board members, we have one more item that's -- which is a review of a Board of Zoning Appeal case to be heard on June 15. This is just General Business. Our action is to decide whether or not to make any recommendations to the BZA on this case.

Let's see. So it is BZA Case 217962, which seeks a variance to construct a wall sign that exceeds the size and height that is otherwise permitted for internally illuminated wall signs.

I believe that Mr. William McFadden is here representing the owner. Do Board members have any questions

for him or for CDD Staff? Questions or comments?

HUGH RUSSELL: Oh, yeah.

MARY FLYNN: Hugh?

HUGH RUSSELL: So I would question why do you need this sign? Why is it so big? Why is it not at the top of the building? Where is it mounted on the building? What does it say? And why should we overturn a 25-year history of not approving such signs? What makes it different?

MARY FLYNN: Mr. McFadden, would you care to answer?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: Certainly. The tenant, Verizon, is remodeling this building and is just simply trying to put a logo up where it's visible. It is a very large building, 120' tall building, and they're just simply trying put their logo up there.

They're not -- they're not putting the word, "Verizon," just a semblance of their model, if you will -- their logo is all they're trying to identify.

It's not -- it's not -- it is a face logo, but it does have red vinyl, so it's not going to be very prominent in the evening. So it's going to be -- it's not going to be in your face. It is definitely a subtle, a subtle look.

MARY FLYNN: And you're the current tenant, is that correct?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: That is correct, yes.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right. So.

HUGH RUSSELL: What side of the building is it on?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: That's the south elevation.

HUGH RUSSELL: So it faces away from East Cambridge neighborhood?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: Right.

MARY FLYNN: What kind of signage do they have right now?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: There is currently nothing up at that elevation. They have some small ground signage, entrance signs and what have you. This is -- because they're remodeling this building, this will be the first larger sign up towards the peak of the building.

MARY FLYNN: All right. And they're changing that use at all within the building? I mean, is it going to be something that's more public than it has been before?

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: I don't believe that's the case. I think they're just trying to get more I would say advertisement for that they're in the region, or they're in

the community.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Thank you. All right. Lou, did you have a question or a comment?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Well, he just answered my question. It's basically advertising to Kendall Square in Boston.

MARY FLYNN: All right. Any other comments, questions?

HUGH RUSSELL: I guess I want: Are there being changes being made to the mechanical systems, in particular, the rooftop systems? My understanding: This building is the noisiest building in East Cambridge and exceeds the current Standard by an enormous amount.

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: I cannot answer that, sir. I am just here on behalf of the signage for Barlo Signs.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. Lou, did you have another thought? No. Okay. Your hand's just up. All right so do we want to make a comment to the BZA on this?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: I appreciated Hugh's opening, which is why would we overturn 25 years of precedent? And I didn't hear anything in the presentation tonight that would argue for that. In fact, our concern is, of course, that we

don't want the tops of our buildings turned into advertising and that's -- you know, and I appreciate the frankness of the petitioner saying that's in fact what the intention is.

So that's my understand -- the impetus of the ordinance as it has stood and been enforced for 25 years. So I think I'd like to be consistent with that.

MARY FLYNN: Mm-hm. Okay. Does anyone disagree with that, Board members? Okay. So then, I would suggest that based on what Tom and Hugh have said that we send a letter to the BZA sort of summarizing our reasons why we think that this should not be approved and, you know, why it violates -- again, 25 years' worth of history.

Daniel, do you feel like you have enough to send a quick note off to the BZA?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Certainly. Thank you, Chair Flynn. I think we can draft something.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. All right.

HUGH RUSSELL: Daniel, you might want to fact check. It may be 40 or 50 years of history.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. So can I have a motion to the effect, then, that we will send a letter to the BZA recommending against the requested sign permit?

HUGH RUSSELL: So moved.

MARY FLYNN: Thank you. Is there a second?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Second.

MARY FLYNN: Louis, thank you. Roll call vote, Daniel?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Roll call on that motion: Lou Bacci?

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Tom Sieniewicz?

TOM SIENIEWICZ: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Hugh Russell?

HUGH RUSSELL: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Ashley Tan?

ASHLEY TAN: Yes.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Catherine Preston Connolly?

CATHERINE PRESTON CONNOLLY: I'm going to abstain.

DANIEL MESSPLAY: And Mary Flynn?

MARY FLYNN: Yes.

[All vote YES]

DANIEL MESSPLAY: That is six members voting in favor, with one member abstaining.

MARY FLYNN: Perfect. All right. Mr. McFadden,

thank you very much for joining us. We appreciate your input very much. Thank you.

WILLIAM MCFADDEN: Thank you very much.

MARY FLYNN: So that concludes the business on our agenda. Are there any additional comments from Staff?

DANIEL MESSPLAY: Not at this time, Chair Flynn. Thank you.

MARY FLYNN: Okay. We meet again next week. We have a busy June. Okay. Board members, do you have anything you'd like to add before we adjourn? No? Very good. All right. Well, we are adjourned, then. Everyone have a nice evening.

LOUIS J. BACCI, JR.: Goodnight, everyone.

COLLECTIVE: Goodnight.

[09:12 p.m. End of proceedings.]

E R R A T A S H E E T

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I have read the foregoing transcript of the Planning Board, and except for any corrections or changes noted above, I hereby subscribe to the transcript as an accurate record of the proceedings.

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Name Date

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Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Middlesex, ss.

I, Michele Dent, Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do hereby certify that the above transcript is a true record, to the best of my ability, of the proceedings.

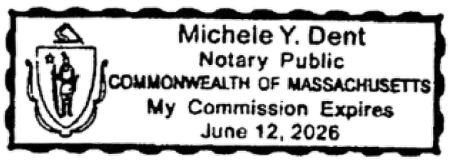
I further certify that I am neither related to nor employed by any of the parties in or counsel to this action, nor am I financially interested in the outcome of this action.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 30th day of June, 2023.

Notary Public

My commission expires:

June 12, 2026



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