

TOWN OF DEDHAM
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

John R. Bethoney, Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq., Vice Chair
James E. O'Brien IV, Member
Jessica L. Porter, Member
James McGrail, Esq., Member
Andrew Pepoli, Associate Member



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Jeremy Rosenberger
Planning Director

**PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

**TOWN OF DEDHAM
450 WASHINGTON STREET
DEDHAM, MA**

**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING BOARD MEETING
VIA TELECONFERENCE
MAY 12, 2021, 6:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS:

John R. Bethoney	Chair
Michael A. Podolski, Esq.	Vice-Chair
James E. O'Brien IV	Member
Jessica L. Porter	Member
James McGrail	Member
Andrew Pepoli	Associate Member

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF:

Jeremy Rosenberger	Planning Director
Michelle Tinger	Assistant Planning Director
Jennifer Doherty	Administrative Assistant

Minutes prepared by Mary-Margaret Scrimger of Minutes Solutions Inc. from an audio recording.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman of the Planning Board, Mr. Bethoney, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. DESIGNING DEDHAM 2030 UPDATE

Update on the Designing Dedham 2030 Master Plan Process. *Josh Fiala & Carolina Prieto, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)*

Ms. Porter, a Master Plan Committee member, provided an update, noting that the master plan is a living document that gives continuity in decision-making throughout the Town. Various people provided insight and feedback. Ms. MacDonald, the Master Plan CoChair and a Select Board member, noted that COVID-19 influenced the process.

Mr. Fiala provided insight into the master plan. The Town of Dedham hired MAPC, and the Master Plan Committee has been guiding MAPC staff. The master plan should be completed by the end of 2021, with the remainder of the work focusing on details.

Various events were organized where information was acquired and then synthesized into coherent information. There has been additional outreach. There were approximately 2,400 participants in events, representing about 1,700 households and 17% of Dedham's 10,035 households. Younger demographics have been less engaged with this project. The majority of those reached are Caucasian. Specific outreach is being done to under-represented populations.

Overall, the community prioritized the following: fiscal responsibility, sustainability, and inclusivity. Other priorities include improving walkability in the Town, providing more affordable housing, improving safe transportation, focusing on natural and cultural resources, and enhancing town governance to be more inclusive. Mr. O'Brien noted that the data received was when the pandemic was at its height. It brought a spotlight to the Town's weak areas. The next update will be in the fall. The presentation that was shown tonight will be provided to Mr. Rosenberger to be distributed to the Board.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to approve the minutes from April 25, 2019, with minor grammatical changes. The motion was seconded by Mr. O'Brien. A roll call vote was taken:

**James O'Brien: Yes
Jessica Porter: Yes
Michael Podolski: Yes
John Bethoney: Yes**

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0. It was noted that Mr. McGrail had briefly left the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to approve the minutes from May 23, 2019, as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Podolski. A roll call vote was taken:

**James O'Brien: Yes
Jessica Porter: Yes
Michael Podolski: Yes
John Bethoney: Yes**

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0. It was noted that Mr. McGrail had briefly left the meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Podolski to approve the minutes from June 13, 2019, as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Porter. A roll call vote was taken:

**James O'Brien: Yes
Jessica Porter: Yes**

Michael Podolski: Yes
John Bethoney: Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 4-0. It was noted that Mr. McGrail had briefly left the meeting.

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to approve the minutes from June 27, 2019, as amended with minor grammatical changes and name corrections. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGrail. A roll call vote was taken:

James O'Brien: Yes
James McGrail: Yes
Jessica Porter: Yes
Michael Podolski: Yes
John Bethoney: Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Ms. Porter asked for the recent meeting minutes to be available. Mr. Rosenberger noted that a third party is addressing the meetings and providing a synopsis of the meeting, not a transcript. The priority of minutes will be switched to more recent minutes.

4. PUBLIC HEARING

95 Eastern Avenue—SREG Management, LLC

Request for a Special Permit for a Major Nonresidential Project, Special Permit for hotel use in a Flood Plain Overlay District, Special Permit to exceed the allowable building height, Major Site Plan Review, and associated waivers to construct a six (6) story, 120 room hotel, and 144 off-street parking spaces. The subject property is located at 95 Eastern Avenue, Dedham MA, Assessors Map/Lot 123-16 and 123-22, and is located within a Highway Business (HB) Zoning District and Flood Plain Overlay District (FPOD). Dedham Zoning By-Law Section 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 8.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.4, 9.5, Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. Representative: Kevin Hampe, Esq.

Mr. Hampe, legal counsel for SREG Management, presented the project. Mr. Carr noted that this is a 120 room hotel north of the Dedham marketplace with no meeting rooms or restaurants. There has been discussion regarding height approval. Approval will be discussed with the Zoning Board as well as the Planning Board.

Mr. Fraiser provided insight into the changes that have happened due to the peer review. An effort has been put in to reduce the height's appearance and fit into the neighborhood aesthetic. As the neighborhood develops, it will grow around this hotel. The material has been changed to be more durable. This material has increased expense but will be better for the long term.

Mr. Senisi, an architect retained to review the proposal, highlighted issues raised and how they were resolved. For example, materials were upgraded. They are now consistent with the illustrations presented. Three different canopy designs were presented in the initial presentation. This design has been distilled into a more consistent aesthetic that will have

longevity. The upper portion of the building was changed to glass to reflect the sky and appear shorter.

Mr. Pepoli asked the design team about "EFIS" (Exterior Insulation Finishing System) a modern version of stucco. It was selected because it is cost-effective, versatile, and there is a significant color range. Mr. Podolski commented that 60 feet of height is above the 50 feet town restriction. He asked the applicant if any hotels have been designed to be 50 feet. It was noted that because of the soil and site conditions, there are limits to increasing the footprint rather than build up.

Mr. Podolski requested additional drawings from different angles to show a more accurate presentation. He asked if the project is viable if there are not six floors. Mr. Podolski asked if building height was discussed with the building consultants.

The applicant discussed the height within a visual context, which resulted in the material changes such as glass at the very top level. There is a significant expense to put in a stable foundation because there is a flood plain and a marshland. Due to this, building up is how it becomes financially viable. Additionally, there is no source of revenue other than the rooms. Finally, Mr. Podolski noted that waivers are only given for a good reason. All these challenges were known about when the site was purchased.

Ms. Porter confirmed that she would also like photos from additional angles. Ms. Porter requested improvement on the back of the building because there are no windows. She asked for more information regarding a sign at the top of the hotel and if it would be illuminated. It was confirmed that signage is important because guests are arriving for the first time, providing a reference point. Ms. Porter disagreed with this as most people are taking an Uber or using their GPS. She voiced concern that an illuminated sign would negatively impact residential neighborhoods nearby. It was noted that trees would block the building from various locations. Ms. Porter still wanted a visual to show this.

Mr. McGrail asked if there would be an American flag on the site and if there would be balconies. It was confirmed that there would be a flag, but there would not be any balconies. He then noted the same concerns as the other Board members. He asked if there could be a balloon test that would mark the height of the four corners, and photos would be taken. Additionally, he requested information on what options there are for the branding of this hotel. Finally, he asked why it costs more to spread out the building. The applicant confirmed that with this location, the foundation requirements require a more significant foundation.

Mr. Saletin, with SREG, noted that the foundation is significant due to poles being put 90 feet into the ground. Without 120 rooms being built, the hotel is not viable. He noted that there had not been any requests for economic support from the Town. Similar developments ask for tax incentives and real estate relief. There has been a significant effort to create a hotel that is suitable for the Town. Mr. Pepoli noted that this is a single entity, and returns are a consideration.

Mr. Bethoney reinforced the request for a balloon test, an American flag, and a decrease EFIS also. He felt the building was too modern and resembled a parking garage. However, he did note that significant effort was put into the design and that this is his own opinion.

Mr. O'Brien thanked the applicant for all of the efforts. He also requested that more effort be invested in aligning the aesthetic with Dedham's historical nature.

Mr. Bethoney opened the floor for discussion from the public. Ms. Smeagol provided her address. She noted that the design has improved, but it is not great. There is no wow factor. She also requested multiple views to show the scale and impact of the hotel in the neighborhood. The height was also problematic for her. She was unhappy with the glass on the top as it could impact migratory birds. She asked if there would be greenery on the top of the building.

Mr. Saletin reinforced that the hotel brand has not been selected, but it will be Marriott or Hilton. Due to this, there are initial building guidelines that need to be followed. He will take into consideration all of the feedback provided.

Mr. Hampe asked for a continuance so that all the issues can be addressed. Mr. Rosenberger noted that there would be room on the agenda for June 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to continue the public hearing of 95 Eastern Avenue on June 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGrail. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
John Bethoney:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

80 Bridge Street, Petruzzello Properties, LLC:

Request for a Special Permit for a Mixed-Use Development Project, Special Permit for work within a Flood Plain Overlay District, Major Site Plan Review, and any associated waivers to construct a four (4) story, 41 dwelling unit Mixed-Use Development and 66 off-street parking spaces. The subject property is located at 80 Bridge Street, Dedham MA, Assessors Map/Lot 14-54, and is located within General Business (GB) and Local Business (LB) Zoning Districts and Flood Plain Overlay District (FPOD). Dedham Zoning By-Law Section 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 7.4, 8.1, 9.2, 9.3, 9.5, Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3. Representative Peter A. Zahka, Esq.

Mr. Bethoney noted that he has a conflict of interest on all Petruzzello Properties due to a professional relationship. He recused himself and left the meeting. Mr. Podolski took the role of Chair.

This matter is a continuation from May 6, 2021. Mr. Rosenberger noted that the applicant is requesting a special permit for this project in a flood plain zone.

Mr. Zahka noted that 22 issues had been addressed in the first peer review. All outstanding issues have been addressed. One item was that snow would need to be trucked off site if there was an abnormal snowstorm. All engineer questions have been addressed.

There is a drainage easement from the Town that is being modified to better reflect the drain system.

Mr. Findlen, who provided the peer review, confirmed that the application abides by the town bylaws and requirements. The applicant is paying for this service.

Mr. McGrail asked to allow the public to ask questions due to how long the meeting was running.

Mr. Jim Sullivan of 299 Riverside Drive, understood there was a lot of opposition to the project, but given the past plight on the street, he felt the street was getting a nice upgrade lately. He would like to see the project move forward rather than see the decrepit building falling down. He feels Bridge Street has improved over the last several years, and that other stories are negligible. It is a local builder who does excellent work. He asked for people's support.

Ms. Dopazo Gilbert of 70 Violet Ave and noted her support for the project for reasons similar to Mr. Sullivan. The aesthetic is an improvement, and the traffic impact would be insignificant. She felt strongly about the increased taxes from the development and the affordable housing element.

Ms. Beth Gustin of 8 Walker Lane stated that she felt that the building was too large and high for the area.

Ms. Barry Preston of 43 Ames Street supported Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Dopazo's rationale. She asked if there could be a community amenity in the building, such as a drop-in space. Mr. Petruzzello noted that he considered access to the river, but the vegetation makes it challenging. He welcomed suggestions to engage the community in this space.

Mr. Carl Bonvini of 20 Breede Terrace noted his deep roots in the community and involvement in the project. He pointed out that this building would be 25% higher than all others in Riverdale. He believes it is too large, although he appreciates the work that has been done so far. He is also concerned about increased traffic and questioned if the improvement is right for the area.

Mr. MacFarlane owner of MacFarlane Energy, directly across the street. He noted that he is likely the most impacted by the project due to his property location. He is supportive of the project but requested the project be kept to three stories. Mr. Zahka noted that four levels are needed to keep the quality and be fiscally responsible. Mr. MacFarlane is extremely concerned about the parking limitations and snow removal.

Ms. Leah Kane of 40 Riverside Drive noted that the size of the building is too large. She would rather not have looming apartment buildings.

Mr. Podolski opened the floor to the Board for comment. Ms. Porter asked Mr. Petruzzello if parking will be sufficient. Mr. Zahka noted that there should be enough. He also noted that Mr. Petruzzello will run this building and will address issues as they arise. Ms. Porter asked if there will be EVR charging stations and bike storage. Mr. Petruzzello is investigating this option and will have an answer at the next meeting. For bike storage, there will be some either outside or inside. This will be clarified at the next meeting.

Ms. Porter asked about sustainable energy sources. Mr. Petruzziello noted that the roof is not large enough for solar panels. Mr. McKay noted that Mr. Petruzziello is ahead of the curve for energy efficiency, as all his buildings have had electric charging stations. Ms. Porter asked for illustrations of the building's rear. This will be provided. She also thanked Mr. Petruzziello for the addition of two-bedroom units and requested more in the future.

Mr. McGrail thanked the neighbors for their feedback on the project and noted that Mr. Petruzziello is invested in the community. If this project is not approved, it is likely to be someone without the same connection to the community. However, he is concerned about the size of the project.

Mr. O'Brien had similar feelings as Mr. McGrail. The site is unique, located on the Charles River. Mr. O'Brien had hoped the metrics would have allowed for the building to be three stories. Currently, the building is an eyesore and an opportunity for development. Mr. Pepoli asked for information regarding the turning radii around the building. There is one area that is a pinch point but is within regulations. He noted that there are two parking spaces along the Charles River that appear very tight. This will be addressed.

Mr. Pepoli also noted that that garbage bins are in the flood plain. It was pointed out that garbage bin placement was done due to truck access. Mr. Pepoli noted that change is inevitable, especially with Boston growing. He noted the same concern of Mr. McGrail and Mr. O'Brien: If not this then what else? He also felt that this is on the edge of Riverdale, not the heart of it.

Mr. Podolski asked for clarity regarding the size of the handicap spaces. Mr. Zahka confirmed that they meet the ADA requirements. There was discussion regarding access to the strike island from the driver's side or the passenger side. Ms. Porter noted that the building height is a concern for her also. This is an area that will be developed and there is a housing need. For that, she appreciates the project. The project is well designed and aesthetically pleasing. She would like to be clearer with developers going forward regarding design guidelines.

Mr. Zahka wanted to clarify that many waivers are due to the relationship between the street and the river. If this were a new development, it would be structured differently. On this street, it is an assortment of zoning. Initially, this project was a three-story apartment building, but feedback from meetings concluded that they were more comfortable with a commercial/residential mix. Other potential developers evaluated this space, but the property cost was a deterrent. Mr. Zahka reinforced that this works fiscally and is within the bylaws.

A motion was made by Ms. Porter to continue the public hearing of 80 Bridge Street, Petruzziello Properties, LLC on June 9, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. McGrail. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

5. NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Rosenberger was advised by the commissioner and legal for Needham Bank that there is a noted discrepancy in net floor calculation. This means that there is more footage, requiring two new parking spaces. Due to this, the Planning Board needs to be consulted. This can be a vote at the next meeting.

Typically, elevators shafts and other support systems are not included in the floor plan calculation. It appears there is confusion on how to calculate this item. It was requested that Building Commissioner Ken Cimeno be part of the discussion for clarity and for future issues of this nature. Mr. McKay noted that he prepared the calculations for this project, excluding elevator shafts and utility rooms. The next agenda will include this matter.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion duly made by Mr. O'Brien, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Pepoli. A roll call vote was taken:

James McGrail:	Yes
Jessica Porter:	Yes
James O'Brien:	Yes
Michael Podolski:	Yes
Andrew Pepoli	Yes

Motion passed unanimously, 5-0. The meeting was adjourned.

DISCLAIMER

The above minutes should be used as a summary of the motions passed and issues discussed at the meeting of the Board of the Planning Committee. This document shall not be considered a verbatim copy of every word spoken at the meeting.