

**BROCKTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**Tuesday May 7, 2024 - 6:00 PM**

Chair Toni Goncalves opened up the meeting with a Roll Call...

Members present are

- Toni Goncalves - Planning Board Chair
- James Sweeney - Planning Board Member
- Iolando Spinola - Planning Board Member
- Marty Crowell - Planning Board Member
- Larry Hassan - Planning Board Member
- Edward Williams - Deputy Fire Chief
- Rob May - Director of Planning & Economic Development
- Evan Sears - Planner II
- Rhode Germain - Administrative Assistant II
- Isaiah Thelwell - Administrative Assistant

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**Review and Acceptance of Minutes**

The Board reviewed the minutes of the last Planning Board meeting that took place on 04-02-24.

**A motion to approve** the minutes was properly made by James Sweeney, seconded by Larry Hassan. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

**ANR Endorsements**

**30 Christy's Drive**

Planner Evan Sears explained that an existing building is currently straddling two lots. To remedy this, one lot will convey some land to the other. Once the transfer is complete, both lots will have the required frontage, qualifying the situation as an Approval Not Required plan.

**A motion to endorse** was properly made by James Sweeney, seconded by Marty Crowell. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

**365 Westgate Drive**

Planner Evan Sears explained that a small triangular portion of land at Brockton's Westgate Mall, used by an adjacent property for parking, is being split off. This split-off portion will be a non-buildable parcel, making it a one-lot plan and allowing it to qualify for an Approval Not Required plan.

**A motion to endorse** was properly made by James Sweeney, seconded by Marty Crowell. The motion was unanimously approved (5-0).

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## **1. Campello Neighborhood Plan Presentation**

Director Rob May provided an update on the Campello Neighborhood Plan, the project is aimed at revitalizing the Campello neighborhood. The plan, developed with extensive community engagement through meetings and field encounters, emphasizes creating a mixed-use, walkable neighborhood with higher density housing near the MBTA station and the redevelopment of the Campello High Rise. The South Corridor will feature residential development near the river, auto-reliant retail in the commercial box area, and supportive industrial and commercial infill development. Housing recommendations include encouraging transit-oriented development, creating zoning compliant with state laws, and introducing "missing middle" housing. Economic development strategies involve creating an urban renewal district, rezoning for mixed-use development, and relocating auto-oriented businesses. Transportation improvements focus on better bus shelters, wayfinding programs, traffic calming measures, and truck route alternatives. Open space initiatives aim to explore river walk potential, expand Keith Park, and create new pocket parks. Director May emphasized that these highlights are part of a comprehensive plan available on the city's website, with the goal of Planning Board adoption and referral to the City Council for action.

Chair Goncalves inquired about alternative routes for trucks to minimize their presence on Main Street, and May explained the potential of rerouting via Plain Street, although acknowledging the need to consider the nearby school. The current truck route has difficult angles which, if straightened, could improve safety and allow park expansion. James Sweeney asked about the challenges in relocating auto businesses and the K-Mart plaza. May noted the complexity of relocating auto businesses due to zoning laws and suggested using licensing incentives. He mentioned that the K-Mart plaza's lease could potentially be addressed through eminent domain, though costly. The highest priority for redevelopment is the area between Campello Towers and Nilsson Street, including the MBTA station, aiming for a mixed-use area with better residential integration. May emphasized the importance of zoning adjustments, urban renewal plans, and financing strategies, alongside transportation improvements and infrastructure projects to support the community's vision.

### ***Public Comment***

#### *Veronica Stephens -*

During the meeting, Veronica Stephens expressed her support for the community initiatives being discussed and raised two questions. First, she inquired about the potential use of licensing as leverage to move auto businesses, questioning if their licenses could be withheld to force relocations. Second, she asked about the use of eminent domain for the redevelopment of the K-Mart plaza, which she described as an eyesore. Director May clarified that both licensing adjustments and the use of eminent domain are tools available to the city council, not actions he can unilaterally take. He emphasized that these measures are not being recommended lightly or immediately but are potential options if property owners are unwilling to make desired investments. He reiterated that such decisions would ultimately be made by the city council.

**A Motion to approve** was properly made by Larry Hassan and seconded by James Sweeney. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (5-0)

## **2. Brockton Digital Equity Plan Review and Adoption**

Director Rob May presents to The Board the Digital Equity Plan. Per May For the past year, Brockton has collaborated with the Mass Broadband Institute and local residents and businesses to address digital equity. The pandemic highlighted the city's lack of preparedness for digital transitions, such as remote work and online education. The city's digital equity efforts focus on three main areas: ensuring fast, reliable, and affordable internet access to homes; providing access to a range of devices beyond just smartphones; and improving residents' ability to use the internet and digital devices effectively. Statistics reveal significant digital inequities in Brockton: 2,500 homes lack any internet access, 11,000 homes lack a laptop or desktop computer, and 10,000 homes rely solely on smartphones for internet access. The primary challenges include affordability, inadequate internet speeds and reliability, limited access to computing devices, and insufficient digital literacy.

To address these challenges, Brockton's proposed action plan includes developing a governance framework for digital equity initiatives and seeking funding to hire a coordinator. The plan emphasizes ongoing outreach to understand and address the needs of income-eligible households, increasing the number of internet service providers to foster competition and reduce costs, and establishing loaner programs with the Brockton Public Library. Additionally, partnerships with nonprofits aim to recycle and redistribute refurbished devices. The plan also focuses on improving digital literacy through the deployment of digital navigators to assist residents in learning how to use the internet and digital devices, offering classes in multiple languages, and continuing to work with state and national organizations specializing in digital skills training. Future considerations include exploring the feasibility of a municipal broadband system similar to Quincy's initiative. Although financial constraints make this challenging, potential partnerships for managing such a system might offer a viable solution.

The initiative aims to lower costs for disadvantaged residents first, with a broader goal of reducing internet costs city-wide by increasing competition among ISPs. Ensuring schools are prioritized in the digital equity plan is also a key focus. Overall, Brockton's digital equity plan addresses immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term solutions to ensure all residents have access to affordable, reliable internet and the skills to use it effectively.

**A Motion to approve** was properly made by Iolando Spinola and seconded by Larry Hassan. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (5-0)

### **3. Site Plan Review**

**Property: 160 Pleasant Street**

**Parcel ID#: 052-500**

**Applicant: Vicente's Tropical Market**

**Representative: J.K Holmgren Engineering**

Scott Faria with J.K Holmgren Engineering presents the Site Plan Review application for 160 Pleasant Street on behalf of Vicente's Tropical Market. Per Faria the project which includes a 1,600 sq. ft. warehouse addition at the back of the store along Green Street and enhancements to the parking area using existing grass areas. The previous 2014 plan had accounted for this expansion, ensuring no increased runoff issues, with green space increasing from 10.2% to approximately 12%. Traffic improvements are planned by enlarging the concrete island at Pleasant Street to enforce right-turn-only exits and entrances, which aims to improve traffic flow and encourage use of other entrances. Landscaping will include new trees and landscaped islands in the parking areas and along Green Street. Chair Toni Goncalves expressed support for the plan, noting the improvements in traffic management and green space. James Sweeney questioned alternative traffic management options and the addition of street trees, while Iolando Spinola inquired about the number of new trees, sidewalks, and stormwater management. Approval from the city engineer for stormwater management is pending.

**A motion to approve with standard conditions and the following special conditions** was properly made by Larry Hassan and seconded by James Sweeney. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (5-0)

#### ***Special Conditions:***

- Further revise the "right in, right out" to include additional signage and any other necessary design elements
- Final approval is contingent on review and approval of on-site stormwater management by City Engineer

### **4. Definitive Subdivision**

**Property: 454 Copeland Street**

**Parcel ID#: 080-074**

**Applicant: Americad Properties**

**Representative: J.K Holmgren Engineering**

Scott Faria with J.K Holmgren Engineering presents the Site Plan Review application for 454 Copeland Street on behalf of Americad Properties. Per Faria The applicant sought approval to divide the property into two lots. One lot would remain on Copeland Street, while the other would be incorporated into the Sky View Village project managed by the applicant. The intention was to create additional modular homes within Sky View Village. However, several steps were outlined for approval, including a variance from the Board of Appeals due to the new lot's nonconformity.

**A motion to approve** with standard conditions was properly made by Iolando Spinola and seconded by Larry Hassan, unanimously approved (5-0).

**A motion to waive Lot Frontage** was properly made by Iolando Spinola and seconded by Larry Hassan, unanimously approved (5-0).

## **5. Definitive Subdivision**

**Property: 0 West Street**

**Parcel ID#: 031-516**

**Applicant: Adalgisa Andrade**

**Representative: E.T Engineering Inc**

Planner Evan Sears explained the proposal to subdivide a vacant lot into two lots for single-family houses. The preliminary conditions, including straightening the lot line and adding trees along West Street, have been met. Board members expressed comfort with the project, noting that the houses are already built and this is more of a procedural step. Marty Crowell shared personal history regarding the lot's development, expressing satisfaction with seeing houses built there after a long period of vacancy.

**A motion to approve** with standard conditions was properly made by Marty Crowell and seconded by Larry Hassan, unanimously approved (5-0).

**A motion to waive Lot Frontage** was properly made by Larry Hassan and seconded by Iolando Spinola, unanimously approved (5-0).

**A motion to adjourn** was properly made by Larry Hassan and seconded by James Sweeney, and unanimously approved (5-0).