

**BROCKTON PLANNING BOARD MINUTES**  
**Tuesday January 7th, 2025 - 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
- Marty Crowell - Planning Board Member
- Matthew Gallagher - Planning Board Member
- Rob May - Director of Planning & Economic Development
- Evan Sears - Planner II
- Durreshahwar Ali - Planner I
- 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 **11-19-24 & 12-3-24**

**A motion to approve** the minutes was properly made by James Sweeney, seconded by Matthew Gallagher. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

**Lot Release**

**Mia Meadows: Lots 8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17**

Planner Evan Sears provides an update on the Mia Meadows subdivision located on North Quincy Street, approved in September of 2024. Sears explains that the project comprises two separate dead-end roads, with one road nearly complete. The applicant is now requesting the release of lots 8 through 17 to proceed with their work, while lots 1 through 7 and lot 18 will remain under The Board's control.

Sears confirms that the Department of Public Works has inspected the work and verified that everything is in order to release these lots. -No motion and vote

**A motion to accept** was properly made by Marty Crowell, seconded by Matthew Gallagher. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

**Continuance Requests**

**1. Return to ZBA - Property: 244 & 252 Warren Ave**

## **Proposed Zoning Change**

### ***MBTA Communities Multi-family Overlay District***

- 1. Ordinance: Be it ordained, pursuant to Section 27-5 of the City Ordinances “Zoning Map” whereby reference is made to and incorporation of said boundaries of each of the zones established as shown on the map entitled, “The City of Brockton, Massachusetts Zoning District Map” dated November 10, 1967, and thereafter amended, that said map be amended to reflect the following zoning change: (see attached zoning parcels)*
- 2. ORDINANCE: Be it ordained by the City Council of the City of Brockton to adopt a new section of the Zoning Ordinance as follows:*

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Director Rob May gave an overview of the proposed Zoning Amendment, May explained that the overlay district allows developers to choose between the base zoning or the overlay district, which aims to encourage development near transit stations in downtown, Campello, and Montello. While the overlay lacks the more detailed features of the form-based code currently under review, it addresses state requirements. The City Council’s Ordinance Committee has already approved the proposal, and a final vote is anticipated by late January. Questions from board members touched on the potential revenue the plan could generate, with Rob May noting that projections are not yet available but agreeing to conduct further analysis. May also covered plans for master zoning in Montello and Lovett Brook areas, which are expected to be integrated with the form-based code. Board members expressed concerns about long-term implications and the flexibility of zoning boundaries, with assurances from May that amendments could be made as needed. Maps were shared to clarify the overlay district’s boundaries, which were drawn to include properties suitable for redevelopment and to meet state compliance targets.

### *Public Comment*

*Veronica Stephens (32 Green Pl)* expresses significant concerns about the proposed overlay district and the potential impacts on her property and the surrounding community. She assumes the measure will be passed quickly due to time constraints but voices unease about the lack of clarity regarding its implications. Stephens highlights concerns about speculative development, increased property demand potentially pricing residents out, and the strain on the planning board due to a surge in applications. She emphasizes the importance of thoughtful, accountable development through form-based zoning rather than the temporary measures in the overlay district. Director May explains that the overlay district would allow multifamily developments by right with specified guidelines, such as setbacks, lot sizes, and building heights, but the specifics depend on factors like parking.

Stephens points out potential issues, such as hasty construction, incongruent building sizes disrupting neighborhood aesthetics, and the risk of prioritizing residential growth over industrial and commercial development, which could generate more tax revenue. She critiques the lack of accountability in the current proposal and stresses the need for balanced growth that supports both residents and city finances. Veronica also mentions concerns about rooftop signs and their

practicality, asking for more careful consideration before implementation. Throughout the discussion, she advocates for a more deliberate approach to city planning to ensure sustainable and equitable development.

**A motion to recommend favorably** was properly made by James Sweeney seconded by Matthew Gallagher in addition to the addendum of the language establishing all restaurants on Main Street have rooftop signage. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

## **2. Return to ZBA**

**Property: 1003 Crescent Street**

**Parcel ID#: 141- 003**

**Applicant: P & L Custom Homes**

**Representative: J.K Holmgren Engineering**

Scott Faria from J.K Holmgren Engineering presented a Return to ZBA application for 1003 Crescent Street. The previous plan, which included a 40-foot-wide Street layout without a cul-de-sac, was rejected due to concerns raised by the fire chief about the narrow roadway and lack of proper turnaround space. The updated plan now features a 50-foot-wide layout with a 60-foot-radius cul-de-sac, meeting subdivision regulations for street width, pavement, and cul-de-sac size. The lots remain substandard in frontage and area but comply with other requirements.

Board members inquired about fire hydrant placement, with Faria confirming one hydrant at the cul-de-sac and another across the street, spaced 500 feet apart. He indicated a willingness to add another hydrant if required by the ZBA.

**A motion to approve** was properly made by Matthew Gallagher and seconded by James Sweeney. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

## **4. Site Plan Review**

**Property: 1380 Main Street**

**Parcel ID#: 117-033, 117-034**

**Applicant: Brockton Housing Authority**

**Representative: GM2 Associates**

Attorney John McCluskey, representing Brockton Housing Authority, introduced Site Plan Review application for 1380 Main Street, highlighting plans to replace the current two 10-story towers with three new 6- and 7-story buildings. These new structures will offer 400 units of deeply affordable senior housing, maintaining priority for current residents to move into the new apartments seamlessly. Steve Baker from BWA Architecture provided further details, explaining that the site spans 6.2 acres, bounded by Main Street, industrial zones, and the wooded Salisbury Plain River. The design addresses challenges like floodplain limitations, the need to maintain housing for current residents during construction, and existing storm drain easements. The proposed layout features three buildings, with two along Main Street to create a street edge, and the third strategically placed to fit within the constraints. Sustainable design and high-efficiency systems will ensure long-term viability. Amenities include a community room and resilience

center with a commercial kitchen to support residents and broader community needs, particularly during heat or cooling emergencies. Outdoor features will include walking paths and seating along the river.

The project's architecture incorporates durable materials like architectural concrete masonry and metal siding to ensure low maintenance, with thoughtful design elements like shadow boxes for visual interest. Overall, this redevelopment aims to provide modern, sustainable, and community-focused housing for Brockton's senior residents while integrating with the neighborhood context. Per Baker, The project will be completed in three phases, starting with Building 1, which is expected to begin construction by the end of the year. Phase 2 will involve Building 2, commencing approximately a year later, depending on financing availability. Phase 3 will focus on Building 3, following the demolition of existing structures (Buildings A and B) to make way for additional developments, including a rotary. Outdoor and community spaces are integral to the design, with each building featuring designated areas such as terraces, plazas, and small gathering spots. A riverside walkway with benches will further enhance recreational opportunities for residents. The development also addresses floodplain challenges by elevating Building 3 and modifying site grading. The plans, designed to ensure compliance with conservation regulations, have been thoroughly reviewed and approved by peer consultants. During the discussion, the demand for senior housing was highlighted, with James Sweeney noting the critical shortage and inquiring about the possibility of expanding capacity. Although the project's scope is limited by financing complexities, the developers emphasized their commitment to addressing housing needs. This discussion underscores the thoughtful planning and community-oriented focus of the project.

Thomas Thibeault, the Executive Director of the Brockton Housing Authority, responds to concerns about the limitations of the site, explaining that the property cannot accommodate additional units due to water-related issues. He highlights the long-term plan to address deficient state units and redevelop existing properties like Kennedy Drive and Rainbow Terrace, potentially adding new units in the future. This plan is supported by the state, despite the lengthy waiting list for senior housing. Sweeney expresses approval of the plan but suggests adding sconce lighting to enhance the design. Marty Crowell shares a personal anecdote about her sister-in-law's experience living in the current buildings, expressing gratitude for the new development, which she finds a vast improvement. Matthew Gallagher asks questions about tenant costs and accessibility, receiving assurances that current tenants will not be displaced and that rents will remain based on income. He also inquires about the cost of making apartments more accessible, with the response that the housing authority would bear these costs. Gallagher concludes by expressing his appreciation for the program's support of elderly residents.

### *Public Comment*

*Susan Nicastro, Ward 4 Councilor*, expresses strong support for the development project, citing her close connection to the area and the deteriorating condition of the current buildings. She is particularly enthusiastic about the new buildings, which will feature improvements like parking spaces, walking paths, and possibly even a garden. She asks about the number of elevators in each building, to which Steve Baker confirms there will be two elevators per building, providing redundancy in case one fails. Nicastro also inquires about the size of the new units compared to

the existing ones. Baker responds that the new units are 25% larger, offering more space for residents, including wheelchair access in bathrooms and kitchens.

Nicastro praises the design improvements, particularly the full-size elevators, which will better accommodate emergency responders and residents during emergencies. She also discusses the impact of global warming on the Salisbury Plain River and the flooding that has affected the area, particularly the first floor of Building B. Nicastro concludes by urging support for the project, highlighting its importance in addressing long-standing issues and improving conditions for residents.

**A motion to approve with standard conditions**, in addition to the following special conditions was properly made by Matthew Gallagher seconded by James Sweeney. The motion was unanimously approved (4-0).

***Special Conditions:***

- *The project must return to Site Plan Review before beginning Phases 2 & 3*
- *The addition of Sconce lighting to the front of the building.*

## **5. Site Plan Review**

**Property: 1005 Belmont Street**

**Parcel ID#: 009-183**

**Applicant: Father Bill's & Mainspring**

**Representative: Joyce Consulting Group**

Attorney John McCluskey, representing Father Bills & Mainspring discusses the Site Plan Review project for the old Carlton House at 1005 Belmont Street, which is currently owned by Father Bill's and has 69 units for homeless housing. He highlights the positive impact of the existing property and requests approval for an additional building with 29 units. He emphasizes that the project is allowed under the Dover amendment and has already addressed parking requirements, ensuring there will be 100 parking spaces. McCluskey believes this development will benefit both the city of Brockton and the homeless community, offering a good location near public transportation.

Michael Joyce from Joyce Consulting Group presents more details of the proposed project. The project will add a 29-unit building to the existing site, which currently houses the Roadway Parks Building. The new building will be located in an underutilized parking area. Joyce outlines various updates made after technical review, including relocating the building further from wetlands, adding more stormwater infrastructure, and reducing the number of units from 31 to 29. He explains that the project will improve stormwater runoff by 40% and will include substantial landscaping and additional catch basins to manage water drainage. The building will be ADA-compliant and the landscaping plan includes additional plantings for screening.

Mike Marotta from Westbrook Architects presented the design plans for the new building, including elevations and renderings that showcased various views of the building, materials used, and its layout. The building will feature a mix of metal cladding and cementitious siding to create a distinct two-volume look. The site plan includes 7 units on the first floor, with a total of 29 units across three stories, including a handicap-accessible unit. The building also includes small common areas and an elevator. Jon Lanham from Father Bill's & MainSpring discussed the

project's goal to provide permanent supportive housing for individuals who have experienced homelessness, with case management and 24/7 staff support. The funding will come from HUD and MRVPs, with tenants paying 30% of their income for rent. Board members raised questions about the project's scope and the number of units in the area. Jon responded that they currently have 200 units in Brockton and are looking to expand in other communities. The facility is designed for long-term residents with disabilities, aiming to provide private, supportive spaces while helping tenants gain skills for independent living.

### *Public Comment*

*Phillip Griffin, Ward 3 Councilor*, expressed his opposition to the project, citing concerns raised by residents and business owners in the area. He noted that the area, which is densely populated with businesses and some residential properties, also has a shelter opening nearby on Manley Street. Griffin emphasized the uncertainty about the potential impacts of the new facility and suggested that it would be premature to proceed without a clearer understanding of the necessary mitigation measures. He urged the board to delay approval until more information about the project's effects could be gathered.

*Veronica Stephens, 32 Green Pl* echoed concerns about the area around Manley Street, especially regarding pedestrian safety. She pointed out that the street lacks sidewalks, which has led to dangerous situations, including near-miss accidents with pedestrians crossing from the hotel to a nearby mobile station. She emphasized that while only a small percentage of the population may drive, the foot traffic in the area poses significant risks. Stephens called for an assessment of pedestrian safety and crosswalks, especially in areas where traffic from the highway intersects. She urged the board to address these issues before moving forward with the project, expressing a desire for the projects to succeed but with safety prioritized.

*Pat Jacobsen, resident*, directed some questions to Jon Lanham, the manager of the Father Bill's facility, asking about the community's experience with the facility and any complaints received. Jon Lanham responded that there had been very few community complaints and that the facility had generally been successful. He mentioned that 69 residents had moved into apartments, with many transitioning to independent housing, thanks to case management support. The site, which used to be a motel, has become quieter, and staff are on-site 24/7 to address any concerns. Jon also noted that they pay attention to the building's appearance to ensure it fits well with the neighborhood. Regarding the new shelter on Manley Street, Lanham confirmed a spring opening, though there had been slight delays due to equipment issues. McCluskey speaks positively about the existing Father Bill's facility, noting that the location has been operational for many years without major issues, despite an increase in the number of residents. He emphasizes the success of the program and how it serves the community. Chair Goncalves then discusses the Manley Street project, clarifying that it is separate from the current project, and suggests a potential improvement for pedestrian safety.

**A motion to approve with standard conditions** with the following special condition was properly made by Marty Crowell and seconded by James Sweeney, the motion was unanimously approved.

***Special Condition***

*MassDOT upgrade crosswalks wherever necessary*

**6. Definitive Subdivision**

**Property: 0 West Chestnut Street / Meadow Woods/ Matt Flaherty Way**

**Parcel ID#: 023-042**

**Applicant: Patricia's Path Realty Trust**

**Representative: Gallagher Engineering**

Attorney Benjamin Albanese, representing Patricia's Path Realty Trust presented the Definitive Subdivision for 0 West Chestnut Street. He opened by explaining that the proposal is a continuation from a previous hearing, during which board members raised concerns. A key issue discussed was the length of the dead-end street. Brockton's Subdivision Rules and Regulations set a maximum length of 700 feet, but disagreements in measurement methods created confusion. Albanese asserted that the proposed road length, measured to the center of the cul-de-sac, was 687 feet and therefore in compliance. However, Director May noted that the standard practice in Brockton is to measure from the back of the pavement or the end of the right of way, which could place the road length beyond the allowed limit. The lack of a definitive regulation on the measurement point added to the ambiguity.

Albanese emphasized the existence of an easement that could potentially connect the road to West Bridgewater in the future, effectively transforming it from a dead-end street to a throughway, thereby negating the need for a cul-de-sac and bolstering the plan's compliance with subdivision rules. Rob May also sought clarification on parcel boundaries within the subdivision, prompting further explanations from Albanese.

Albanese clarifies that proper notice was given to the city clerk's office, supported by a receipt, and maintains that the notification requirements for the adjacent town of West Bridgewater do not apply under Chapter 41, which governs subdivisions, rather than Chapter 40A, which relates to zoning matters. Albanese emphasizes that abutters were duly notified, noting that the West Bridgewater abutter is essentially the same entity as the Brockton property, rendering additional certified mail unnecessary. He asserts that the planning board lacks the authority to interfere with established easements and references a prior unanimous site plan approval in 2020 for the roadway extending to the West Bridgewater line. Chair Goncalves counters by highlighting advice from legal counsel indicating the road exceeds the permissible length by 40 feet, totaling 740 feet from West Chestnut Street, and cites legal limitations on public ways in subdivisions without prior approval. Albanese refutes the applicability of these rules, asserting the roadway is a private street on private property, not subject to subdivision control. He references design

standards in the planning board's regulations, arguing that the street projection aligns with guidelines for connecting to unsubdivided properties. Tensions rise as Albanese accuses the board of obstructing the roadway despite established legal principles. The conversation shifts to traffic studies, with James Sweeney questioning the data supporting Albanese's claim that the proposed road would only increase traffic by 0.5 percent. Albanese clarifies that the data came from a city-led study conducted by engineers hired by the state through the Old Colony Planning Council.

Albanese questions the arbitrariness of the current measurement rules, suggesting that the road's extension beyond the 700-foot limit to 740 feet was not justifiable. Chair Goncalves reiterates that a waiver is required and emphasizes that approvals beyond the limit without a waiver have not been routine. Further into the conversation, Albanese expresses frustration, pointing out that similar roads had been approved in the past. Marty Crowell comments on the complexity of the case, and emphasizes the need to follow established laws.

### *Public Comment*

*Peter Lynch, abutter*, passionately opposes the proposed development project, emphasizing its potential negative impact on the community. He criticizes the plan to construct a road to facilitate a massive development, describing Ash Street as nothing more than a "cow path" and highlighting safety concerns due to the narrow nature of West Chestnut. Lynch expresses frustration that this project, thought to have been resolved, has resurfaced. He mentions previous legal decisions, including a restriction on road length imposed by the city solicitor, which limited it to 700 feet. Lynch argues that the developer has attempted to circumvent these restrictions by creating confusion around the project. He fears that if the road is built, it will lead to a chaotic situation, with further property developments following. Lynch urges the board to reject the proposal once and for all, stressing that West Bridgewater has already disallowed it and underscoring widespread opposition from local residents.

*Kathy Nowacki, abutter*, raises significant concerns about the project's reliance on an easement on their property, clarifying that it was designated for a public service line, not a roadway. She questions how this easement can legally be included in the development plan. She recounts a troubling incident in 2017 when a public service pipe, possibly for water, was installed across West Chestnut Street without the knowledge or oversight of elected officials, including the absence of a police detail. She emphasizes that the pipe installation's materials and safety remain uncertain. Furthermore, she criticizes the developer for using a decade-old permit to justify the installation, which highlights a pattern of circumventing regulations. Nowacki urges the board to thoroughly review these issues and acknowledge the numerous alterations made to the project. She expresses concerns that the developer may continue to sidestep proper processes to achieve their goals, asking the board to act decisively.

*Veronica Stephens, 32 Green Pl* expresses her agreement with previous speakers and commends the planning board for ensuring accurate measurements, which was a critical issue during the last meeting. She highlights a concern regarding proper notification for property owners, explaining that the developer indicated ownership of the adjacent lot on the West Bridgewater side.



Stephens emphasizes that notifications should extend beyond properties connected by single ownership to inform all relevant West Bridgewater property owners. She echoes Marty's sentiment about the convoluted and confusing nature of the developer's tactics and appreciates the board's vigilance in addressing these issues.

Linda Lynch expands on Peter Lynch's remarks, emphasizing the applicant's strategy of continuously modifying the project after receiving initial approvals. She recounts how the project was initially approved for a 700-foot road, but the applicant retracted plans for building houses and extended the road by an additional 286 feet, bringing it to 986 feet. Lynch highlights the challenge of residents needing to attend meetings in both Brockton and West Bridgewater due to the developer providing different information in each town. She notes West Bridgewater's refusal to approve the project without a connecting road from Brockton and describes the developer's pattern of pushing boundaries, withdrawing subdivision plans, and litigating when not getting the desired approvals. Lynch stresses the collective frustration of the area's residents and their ongoing communication and involvement in opposing the development.

*Phillip Griffin, Ward 3 Councilor* voices his opposition to the project, stating that it does not fit the character of the area and raises significant traffic concerns. He mentions having visited the neighborhoods and spoken directly with residents who shared their concerns and showed him the property in question. Griffin finds the project plans unclear and emphasizes the current and potential future mitigation issues. Given these concerns, he urges the planning board to deny the proposal.

Kyle Holden, the Conservation Agent for the City of Brockton, provides an update on the project from a conservation perspective. He explains that the original Order of Conditions for the project, issued in 2017, remains active due to an extension granted by the Conservation Commission, COVID-related tolling, and the Governor's extension of land use permits. This order now expires in 2025. However, he notes that the plan approved under this 2017 order differs from the one currently being proposed, meaning any changes approved by the Planning Board will require a return to the Conservation Commission for review.

In response to Rob May's question about current site work compliance, Holden shares that he inspected the site recently and observed that a wetland crossing has been installed. However, he identified a stone culvert draining into the wetland that was not included in the 2017 approved plan. Holden has sent a letter outlining these concerns to the developers, and the issue will be addressed at the upcoming Conservation Commission meeting on the 29th of this month.

*Susan Nicasastro, Ward 4 City Councilor*, voices her opposition to the approval of the proposed plan, citing several concerns. She highlights that the road length exceeds Brockton's regulatory requirements and mentions unresolved issues related to the sewer line that she recently shared with the Planning Board and office. Nicasastro also points out that Lot 2 is insufficiently sized without incorporating the cul-de-sac land.

Additionally, she criticizes the inclusion of an easement on the plan, arguing that it is irrelevant and could potentially be misused as justification for allowing high traffic volumes in the future. Given these factors, Nicasastro firmly advises that the plan is not suitable for approval and expresses her gratitude for the opportunity to share her thoughts.

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

**A motion to adjourn** was properly made by James Sweeney and seconded by Matthew Gallagher, and unanimously approved (4-0).