

Question Report

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Topic Webinar ID

2072 Mass Ave Community Meet 978 4410 2085

Question Details

Actual Start Time

3/30/2021 18:46

Actual Duration (minutes)

Question

142

120

#	Question
1	What is the height of the building in comparison to the Senior Housing next door?
2	Can you say more about the decision to eliminate the trees from the green roof? I really liked that there were trees included.
3	with corrected rendering, it shows more clearly the building is out of context with the surrounding. In Dec hearing, the BZA asked for financial justification for the 9 story height. Will you submit such letter to BZA?
4	Who other than 5 Walden residents are in favor of 9 stories facing Mass Ave? You should consider residents of Russell Apt direct abutters in addition CHA the property owner.
5	Is the 5th floor rooftop terrace accessible by all residents? Will you provide more details?
6	What is the total projected cost of the site purchase and building construction under the current design? How does that compare to the potential cost of an AHO-compliant design?
7	What exemptions from the Affordable Housing Overlay zoning regulations are you seeking?
8	Will you be planting any street trees?
9	What is the total proposed height - with all rooftop installations - HVAC, exhaust, elevator headhouse etc. - beyond that defined by Cambridge zoning ordinance, and will that rooftop installation be screened?
10	•How many feet does the 9 story part of the building run along Walden and how many feet does the 9 story run along Mass Ave.?
11	Why are the pickup and drop off parking spaces narrower than required by zoning?
12	What kind of foundation will the building have and how will it be constructed?
13	Sorry, I did not understand that you are not seeking approval under the AHO regs. What exemptions are you seeking under 40B?
14	How close to the rear property line would the 5-story extension be?
15	Would it be possible to make the building taller, so that more people can live there?
16	What percent of the building mass faces Walden and what percent faces Mass Ave.?
17	The pro petition has about 250 now.
18	In the rendering, Russell looks sort of "faded" which reduces its significance in this development...
19	Sean and Jason, I believe you are incorrect in your recollection and that the BZA did formally request you to provide financial transparency and justification for the proposed height of the building, as compared to an AHO-compliant version. If you disagree I urge you to review the transcript to ensure that you are responsive to the request that they made quite explicitly.
20	Factual point: we're up to 250 signatures in support of this project, almost all of whom are Cambridge residents and most of whom are within the neighborhood, so there is lots of support in the neighborhood for this project
21	What is the rationale for essentially no parking? How will this affect residential parking in the area?
22	•What percent of the floor area is in the 9-story portion and what percent is within the 5-story portion?
23	In your latest project updates post you wrote the new design more closely match the height of Russell apartments where the two buildings "intersect" Can you explain what that means. Doesn't the 9 story portion extend 17 feet beyond Russell along their small outdoor space?
24	To clarify my question about the project cost: can you provide the TOTAL estimated cost of the building, which Dennis Carlone has estimated would be about \$30 million total. Is that figure correct and if not what is the correct figure? What would be the total building cost if it was a 6-story (AHO-compliant) building? We are interested to know the TOTAL public funds that will be spent on this project.
25	How will this building be anchored and how deep will the digging go? And, how long would a project such as this take?
26	What are you doing to protect light, space and privacy to Russell residents
27	You would widen Walden? How wide will the sidewalk along Walden be? Wider? More narrow?
28	If this project goes forward, based on previous experience, what do you anticipate would be the level of interest in renting these apartments? Would you anticipate a waiting list to get into this development, and how long might that waiting list be?
29	What precedent do you think this will set for future development of the multiple single-story commercial buildings in the immediate area?
30	How will the building be managed and by whom?
31	Thank you for working so hard to make this project happen, I am a neighbor a few streets away, and am in full support. I know this is outside of your purview, so you may not have an answer, but do you know if there has been any discussion by the city of revising the traffic light setup at that intersection? Perhaps adding a light on Walden set back to the "stop" line, which would streamline the flow of cars? Many cars currently stop for the light way beyond that line, which then creates hazards when cars turn onto Walden.
32	It is clear that Cambridge needs this kind of project. We all have seen the charmless & monotonous blocks of market-rate apt bldgs materializing in many parts of the city. We think this is a very well thought-out and attractive building design and will be a welcome addition to our neighborhood fabric.
33	What is the rationale for only one elevator? Would a 'non-affordable housing' building ever allow a 9 story building with only one elevator?
34	Have you made any assessment as to how traffic at that very busy intersection will be affected during the construction period. ? How long do you expect the total construction period will be?
35	What was the original height that you had for 2050 Mass Ave in the incorrect drawings? And now you have it at 60 feet but a CHA document has it as 57.6 feet.
36	Will any of the units be handicapped accessible?
37	Will you be blocking adjacent sidewalks on Mass Ave or Walden during construction?
38	The question regarding the anchoring: how deep do those piles go, specifically? How large are the piles in girth and length? How many?
39	What was the square footage of the lot at the Finch?
40	Are you coordinating with the other affordable housing construction project being planned for the neighborhood, at Walden Square? E.g, parking during construction.
41	Will the drop off/pick up location be large enough for a school bus?
42	How many feet wider will you make Walden St?
43	How do you sign up in support?
44	I'll add to the fading comment. It's your building that looks faded. How does a building like this, one that is out-of-context (not commensurate) with surrounding buildings because of no set backs, much greater density and much taller height affect surrounding property values? Are there usually tax abatements sought and granted when such buildings depress property values? Does a company such as yours mitigate a loss in surrounding property values or does this fall to the city?
45	Isn't pro forma part of Project Eligibility Application? And City is supposed to publish full application on line but there are no such complete application available. The one on your website is redacted version without any comment to what is redacted. Can you post a complete version on-line?
46	Sorry, I meant that it is 2072 that appears faded, so it doesn't look so dominant over Russell as it will actually be.
47	What is the cost of providing the bike storage? What number are mandatory? Could you not also ask for a waiver under 40B?
48	With all due respect, the word intersect is being used in a misleading way. You should figure out another way to articulate it.

49 Just wanted to also express support for this project. I'm excited to see high-quality affordable housing near transit, and think it will be a boon to the neighborhood.

50 Thank you for this presentation. I live in the neighborhood and am very excited about this project.

51 '@Michael: Here is a recent study about how the addition of low-income housing generally does not change nearby housing pricing:
<https://www.redfin.com/news/low-income-developments-home-values/>

52 I would also like to express support for this project. Thank you for your detailed responses.

53 Would it be possible to add more windows to the building?

54 All versions of your plans seem to be fixed on 48 units. Why is that number so firm? Does developer fee factor into this? Is developer fee a percentage of total cost or is it a fixed cost?

55 How many Cambridge residents will get to be 'affordable housing residents' at 2072? Who picks or decides who gets in and who does not get in?

56 The Community continues to ask questions that reference the AFO because the community Will is that you follow the Affordable Housing Overlay which is humane and integrates the residents into the community. There continue to be opaque answers to the real concerns of the community who support affordable housing and many interlopers (from Cambridge) who are supporting you. Off line responses to important questions are not acceptable. This is not an ordinary design for this community.

57 The community supports 6 stories. The financial aspects appear to be determining the humanity of this project

58 Will you be submitting this new proposal to the BZA as a replacement for the earlier versions? Has the DHCD approved it?

59 Why is development on this site so expensive as compared to others, like Frost Terrace, where fewer stories are feasible?

60 Could you share what the MBTA service reductions are at this time for the 77 Route?

61 Aly, there used to be a petition online for signing up to support the 2072 project, maybe someone could post the link here if it's still up? BTW I'm a homeowner who lives a couple blocks away and I fully support it

62 How many attendees tonight?

63 It's not reasonable to state that the "Community" supports one height proposal over another based simply on the loudest voices at this and other panels. You are excluding myself and many others in this neighborhood who strongly support this project. The community includes multiple opinions.

64 What does "100 % Affordable Housing" actually mean in this setting? What is the average income of a person/family that eventually gets to take up residence in a building like 2072 as proposed? How does that compare to Frost Terrace?

65 Is there a way to see everybody's question, like a normal, oprn zoom chat? If it is on, i cannot access.

66 Did you answer this? What is the cost of providing the bike storage? What number are mandatory? Could you not also ask for a waiver under 40B?

67 This isn't an important question, but why are you required to have bike storage for 3 tandem bikes?

68 What do you think is more important: aesthetic concerns or the humans who will get to live in these 48 affordable units?

69 What are plans for lighting and how will you protect abutters from light and glare?

70 the door opening from the retail space onto walden st looks potentially dangerous to pedestrians

71 The project plans were changed on short notice prior to the previous Planning Board meeting, resulting in some Planning Board members being confused about whether the project was 8 stories across (old plan) or 9/6 (new plan at that time). The updated plans were also not reflected in local signage at the time. Can you commit to provide clear and accurate information on the project well in advance to the Planning Board meeting, to all audiences (Planning Board members, Cambridge officials, and community members)?

72 '@ Anna Spier: Thank you (!) for the link, but it does not answer the question, unfortunately, or the concern it's predicated upon. A real estate attorney I consulted made it clear that any new precedent setting building, in terms of density, height, overall mass negatively affects surrounding property values, and that this is a known fact for those in the business of real estate and development and city management. It would be reckless not to make this a part of the overall presentation.

73 How much higher is this building than the buildings near it?

74 Since you praise Winn, can you comment on this? <https://www.bostonherald.com/2011/10/28/real-estate-honcho-arthur-winn-pleads-guilty-in-campaign-cash-scandal/>

75 The petition in favor of this project is here if you're interested in signing:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1FOPBT_meLYR-cGwvBJQZvYn1DUCLmqXvuxfePKkZWDE/edit

76 Have you consulted with Cambridge Fire about the "inappropriate" necessity of 2 egresses? I have owned a 2 family with 2 egresses for 39 years required by the City and that is humane. Those who are not long term residents of and owners in Cambridge may not be able to listen to and read community will. 2 egresses are very important for children

77 The use of public fair housing funds have certain implications and priorities beyond market rate and financial feasibility. How many units are you saving for those earning minimum wage, those in most desperate need? And will those units be family size?

78 Have the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust established a Project Review Committee for your project? Have they been meeting? And who I are the members?

79 Given ongoing pandemic restrictions, how have you informed the tenants of Russell Apartments about this revised proposal?

80 Will you be able to create some kind of draping or tenting for Russell side during construction.

81 Children so that may be saved in a fire. This is stated by a pediatrician who founded the Teen Health Center in Cambridge and has cared for poor children in Cambridge, Charlestown and Boston Childrens. 2 egresses are essential for families

82 Does the measurement you cite regarding the width of Walden Street (both of 26 ft and 30 feet) include or exclude the space taken up by the painted "lane-lines" between the lanes ?

83 Again, all questions you have been answering are not visible. This is very hard to ask followup clarifications and have a "robust community input". Can you make the effort to have a zoom discussion, not presentation, so we can truly be clear on all information. North Cambridge Stabilization Cttee has invited you to join the group for this purpose only. Please do this!

84 Aren't CHAPA an industry group?

85 will the windows be operable?

86 Is the developer fee capped at 20 Percent? (You may have answered.)

87 While it's true that there is a dire need for housing, this project is a band aid approach toward affordable housing for those who truly need it. Affordable housing in this situation is better understood as middle income housing, right?

88 Have you seen the architecture of other buildings the city has developed, eg. Just a Start? They see to fit in better with the neighborhood aesthetically....

89 If you are going to submit this option to DHCD, will you also submit this Q&A so DHCD can gauge community concerns?

90 Will the windows throughout be operable?

91 I came into the meeting late...I'm sorry I had a conflict, but how many people will be living here? How do the seniors next door feel about it?

92 What specific "retail" uses will be allowed? Would, for example, an adult-use cannabis dispensary, a package liquor store, a fast-food outlet, and a military recruitment center all be possible??

93 I live down the street and the traffic on Mass Ave is really bad right now....how many more cars will this development bring to the city? We are already a very dense city?

94 There is a Q&A button at the bottom of the screen.

95 In addition to the Q&A, will you please post the Zoom viudeo on the project website?

96 It's a very large box that is on Mass Ave....noo...it looks like a large affordable housing project....disagree...

97 Adding a taller building to the other tall buildings along Mass Ave doesn't make it a good thing, do you think?

98 Regarding building height, in the 2.3-mile stretch of Mass Ave between Harvard Square and Alewife Brook Parkway there are only 4 buildings of 8 stories or more (all built 40-50 years ago, none on a busy corner). You have stated that you don't believe this building will set a new precedent but you seemed to be narrowly referring to the precedent for a 9-story affordable housing building. What we are concerned about is establishing a precedent for new 9-story buildings of any kind along Mass Ave.

99 What specific "retail" uses will be allowed? Would, for example, an adult-use cannabis dispensary, a package liquor store, a fast-food outlet, and a military recruitment center all be possible?)

100 In your attempt to conduct outreach to Russell Apartments, can you explain why one of your representatives entered the building without authorization and walked through every floor, placing flyers under each door, without permission during a pandemic, thus putting vulnerable residents at risk?

101 I heard about that too. Worse than disrespectful.

102 They are visible now. Any comments before 8 :07 were not visible

103 30 percent of income— in Cambridge— is different from 30 percent of income in Malden. So, doesn't that change the conversation about what 'affordable housing' is here in Cambridge? Isn't the fact that income, relative to market rate, determines who gets in rather than how poor and needy someone/family is?

104 In addition to Walden Street being too narrow where it meets Mass Ave., it does not meet the Avenue perpendicularly. This creates a particularly difficult right turn for traffic traveling on Walden Street that wish to turn right onto Mass Ave. To allow long-wheelbase vehicles such as school buses to turn right from Walden onto Mass Ave. without overrunning the curb in front of your proposed building, the corner needs to be "rounded" or "clipped" to make the angle onto Mass Ave. easier to navigate. To keep the sidewalk width uniform, would the building developers consider chamfering the corner of just the first floor retail space to allow the City to make the corner wider for cars and trucks to navigate?

105 The benefit of coming to us is for a robust dialogue without being all under control of the developers

106 '@C Pierola: You can see the questions under the Q & A (not chat) icon.

107 responding to individual emails or phone calls is not a public process. this format is too disjointed to have any meaningful discussion.

108 Is there any expectation that lawsuits will be filed against this project? Lawsuits seems to have delayed the St. James project (not affordable housing) significantly. Is this kind of delay included in your planning?

109 Can you please put the front view (looking straight on to the 9 stories on Mass Ave) on the home page of your website?

110 You continue to discuss your costs "valuable time" How about our valuable time which would be reimbursed at a very high level. We are invested in humane affordable housing. This may not meet your business plan. But we do expect respect for the Affordable Housing Overlay and long term Cambridge community members and owners who have cared for low income members for decades

111 Jenny: Despite the pandemic restrictions and the vulnerable tenant population at Russell Apartments, did the Cambridge Housing Authority indeed grant you permission to distribute "memos" door-to-door or was this done by the landlord? Were any tenants exposed to non-residents?

112 In Boston, publically funded affordable housing developments have a requirement of ground floor community benefit, for e.g. Cruz construction new 100% housing will have an NAAACP hq with free rent and a Youthbuild office, also rent free. In many cases, it is the community which requests particular uses that will provide the most community benefit. When we throw out all the height, density, setback requirements, we have to get equitably developed community benefits.

113 In view of the extreme need and demand for affordable apartment homes, how do you justify eliminating a unit?

114 There are 2 cannabis shops on Mass Ave. One across the street north on Mass Ave and a smoke shop on Mass Ave to the right
It is important to describe how you would control it. Or not be able to legally control it

115 Time to quit!

116 Thank you Sean for describing the Walden / Mass Ave intersection as dangerous when you were discussing school buses.

117 thanks !!

118 Thanks to all of you!

119 See you on May 20 :-{

120 I have more questions!