

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COHOES PLANNING BOARD HELD AT 97 MOHAWK STREET
COMMON COUNCIL CHAMBERS
AUGUST 14, 2023 at 6:30PM**

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Mr. Jack Carroll, Chair**
 Mr. Joe Moloughney, Vice Chair
 Mr. Joe Nadeau
 Mr. Joe McCormick
 Mr. Tony D’Angelico

ABSENT: **None**

ALSO PRESENT: **Joseph Seman-Graves, Planner**
 Sharon Butler, Administrative Assistant
 Tess Drauschak, Assistant Planner

Chair Carroll called the September Planning Board meeting to order at 6:30 pm and asked for roll call.
Roll Call; no members absent

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 14, 2023 MEETING

Chair Carroll; first order of business is the meeting minutes from the August 14th meeting, are there any comments, edits, changes, or clarifications, do I have a motion to approve the minutes?
Motion to accept the minutes was made by Member Nadeau 2nd by Vice Chair Moloughney motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member D’Angelico	X	
Member Nadeau	X	
Member McCormick	X	

CONSIDERATION OF AN INTRODUCTION OF A SITE PLAN APPLICATION AND DEDICATION OF AN ESCROW ACCOUNT TO COVER CLOUGH HARBOR REVIEWS OF SAID APPLICATION

Chair Carroll; today’s meeting is the applicant is seeking to introduce a site plan for a Planned Development District amendment at 6 Delaware Avenue. The applicant was previously approved to construct 140 units, 72 which are currently constructed. They are requesting a further 112 units for a final total of 184. Chair Carroll asked the applicant to approach the board and give an explanation of what they want to do.
Mr. Jamie Easton of EP Land Services approached and gave the following details; tonight’s meeting is an introduction to the PDD amendment to Captain’s Lookout. Captain’s Lookout was designed as a PDD in 2006, it was granted by the City Council. It contained 5 buildings these 2 first buildings (shown on sketch provided) are complete, and that is where it stopped, under prior ownership. It is under new ownership as Prime Companies purchased it approximately 6 months ago, and we have been looking to expand, really to redesign Captain’s Lookout PDD for multiple reasons. One is since 2004 things have changed, just so this board is aware, I have been involved in multiple projects even back in 2006. Originally the 140 units were large 2-bedroom condominiums, that was in 5 buildings, after awhile we looked back through site plan approval again because of changing from condos to apartments after the first 2 buildings were built. As part of the PDD requirements there were enhancements to a multi-use path behind this building (on sketch) the traffic light at the corner of Ontario and Delaware, that was part of the project to install that, and the sewage pump station that was installed, was part

of the PDD process. So there were some things required by the PDD, those have been done and achieved by this project, and for this part (on sketch) we are just looking to revise the PDD. So what is the goal of this board and the PDD. PDD is governed by City Council, they are the ones that decide, you are the ones who give recommendations positive or negative to the City Council on what is being proposed. You can ask for additions to the plans as you see fit, then after the PDD gets approved by the City Council then I come back to this board for site plan approval. So we go back to the normal steps/procedures as you normally would for site plan approval, make sure the storm water works, etc. but that is how the process goes. So hopefully you will see me again at a later date, during your site plan approval process. If you have in your packet this big document it goes through a lot of different things but if you go to page 3, you will notice things in there in red you have basically what was approved by the PDD and what the change is to the PDD. You can look at this and the noticeable item is increase in density, we are going from 140 units to 180+ units but as I described previously this project was originally condos, large 2-bedroom condos, certainly with 112 units we are going to have a lot more one bedroom unit in there. So the question is how many bedrooms were in the original PDD when it was done—140 units = 140 2-bedroom units that was 280 bedrooms, when this project is done, how many bedrooms will we have, it will be 290 bedrooms, which isn't a big difference in bedrooms. And the reason I'm bringing that up is it's about waste water flow, water demand and things like that. So from a traffic count we do expect, because there are more units, there will be more cars. The City would like us to look at traffic on Bridge Ave, which we can do, but the traffic would remain the same, as it is based on the number of one bedroom versus two bedroom. So there isn't really a traffic impact, there isn't a water or sewer impact with this project. It is in the flood zone but we have a letter from FEMA saying we can build and there is not adverse effects and we have SHPO sign off on this project they have no problem with this project. Again as we go through this process, we are asking the board to if you feel comfortable you can go to the plans and make recommendations as needed, we want these items included in the final PDD to the city council, you can say Jamie we want you to go back and redraft some things or you can vote with conditions on it. One of the concerns the public has now is the building is the 5 feet proposed from the setback, which is Admirals Walk Condominiums, and the original PDD has 8 feet. We have no problem to change it from the 5 feet to 8 or 10 feet, because what we would do is take it out of the club house. If you look at the renderings, on one of the pages you will see a one-story building that is the club house, we are actually going to differentiate the look of this, as you look at the proposed renderings of the architect you will notice the club house is one story and we did that intentionally, we wanted to break it up architecturally. The other concern the public had is access point from the parking garage out to Delaware Avenue. You can access Delaware Ave right now right here (on sketch) we would have to relocate Delaware Ave. as half of Delaware Ave is on our property. You will see it on the approved 2006 plans that it was always the intent that we had to relocate Delaware Ave into its existing right of way. He then explained to the board how the road would be configured and how it would affect people coming out of the parking garage. He also explained that if the exit out of the parking garage is an issue they can reconfigure the entrance and exit to address people's concerns or it can be addressed at the site plan approval process. What the PDD does, what this board is considering is are you comfortable with the increased density. Are you comfortable with the new plan or do you want us to go back to the original plan. That is really what this board should be considering right now. Some of the citizens' concerns will be addressed with the site plan review process as we come back.

He then turned it over to the board to answer questions they might have.

Member Nadeau; looking at this plan the proposal is to have (inaudible) the 5 of these the one closet to the side doesn't fit there in the first one that they did, if you were involved early on I'm curious as to did they ditch that idea early on right up front when they built these 2 (inaudible) are you following what I'm saying? The space to the north would not fit another one of those units

Mr. Easton; yes the original plan was done back in 2010-time frame when they went from 5 buildings to 4, they moved 2 of these buildings down a little bit to have more parking lot in this area (sketch) so you couldn't fit 5 buildings. At the southern point they put 4 of those buildings in there, that is what the site plan shows. So that was a little bit of a change, you are correct.

Vice Chair Moloughney; I was on the board then. The dimensions of the buildings actually changed as well. The same number of units went from 5 buildings to 4 and they got slightly different dimensions.

Mr. Easton; yes, these buildings got a little bit bigger but square footage wise they are less than the 5 buildings.

Member McCormick; my question is why do you need additional units.

Mr. Easton; the additional units we are asking for, for 2 reasons. One, even though it's the same bedrooms it's, we have a lot of 2 bedrooms and more people now are going to smaller one-bedroom units, they use the additional bedroom for a den. The market shows that people are not using the extra bedroom, they don't care about the square footage. So the demand is increasing for the one bedroom. As I mentioned before the bedroom capacity remains the same in theory but we are adding more units.

Chair Carroll; are these going to be market rate units?

Mr. Easton; yes they will be market rate units.

Member McCormick; are the bedrooms significantly bigger?

Mr. Easton; typically for a market rate apartment, one bedroom is around 900 sq. ft. or so, 2-bedroom units for market rate are typically around 1,200 sq. ft.

Chair Carroll; any more questions from the board?

Vice Chair Moloughney; the density question is going to be one of mine. Some of the impacts have changed, so the waterfront has public easement, that intact, does that wrap around on the southern end, there is no driveway right?

Mr. Easton explained the access to the waterfront

Chair Carroll; you have a 5-foot setback from the walking path to the building right?

Mr. Easton; showed the board on the sketch—there is 6 feet at one point and the rest is 10 or more. He explained that the buildings are V shaped and explained why they are like that.

Vice Chair Moloughney; so it's not a 5-story wall facing the river? It's the parking lot level then maybe one more?

Mr. Easton; no it's just the parking garage.

Vice Chair Moloughney; the site plan stuff is what we need to look at the treatment of that, I don't see in here, these all seem to be drawings from the street rendering side and not the water. In my mind, creating public spaces that are welcoming and not just like walking behind some hotel and having people looking out their windows at you. Definitely a consideration that you want to explore. So then the actual upper floors are all the same, so there isn't different footprint for one bedroom versus two bedroom

Mr. Easton; foot print is the same, the V enhances your views of the riverfront

Member Nadeau; the details of the parking lot, it is off. I have an issue with the density, adding more apartments to Delaware Avenue, the whole island neighborhood is struggling with that and I can't disagree with that. Given that there is still other frontage along there it's still not (inaudible) for Delaware Ave. just so you know I have an issue with the increased density.

Vice Chair Moloughney; I think I'm similar, I'm trying to better grasp what the change means, what the numbers mean, is it bedrooms, bedrooms versus cars what that equates to as far as traffic trips. And I know there was a traffic study and I'm still trying to get my head around what the end result is and the impact on the intersection and people avoiding Ontario Street and cutting through the island and going up around the park to Bridge Avenue. It's not just necessarily traffic on Delaware Ave, it is traffic impacts of the aggregate development.

Mr. Easton; stated that they did a speed study because people were speeding through that area, and there were things that were done that were concerns at the time. They did not do a study for Bridge Ave, so there isn't any data for that area. He then explained about the parking spaces that are on the new plan which is 312 and what was on the original PDD which was 300 spaces, even though we are increasing the number of units the bedroom count only goes up by 10. He stated that the traffic would have little or zero impact on the area.

Chair Carroll; on the study that we will be talking about, are they going to take into consideration the total traffic that is going to be generated, on Delaware Ave. itself, the infrastructure on Delaware Avenue is it going to be physically capable of handling rush hour traffic? How many people maximize it?

Mr. Easton you mean.....

Chair Carroll; the whole complex how many people do you expect to be there?

Mr. Easton; close to 184

Chair Carroll; any study going to be done and can Delaware Avenue handle all of this traffic?

Mr. Easton; it can handle it just fine, the concern is people coming through. Traffic study was already done. He explained the studies that have already been completed.

Vice Chair Moloughney; I guess looking at this, the traffic study you completed would still retain the light at the intersection, to me it is kind of like once you put that light in now you have given the green light for a lot more

development to occur later because now with that light there, it will be able to sustain a lot more traffic than was previous. So it kind of that light triggers everybody down the road. So now everybody develops because the traffic light is good enough.

Joe Seman-Graves; to answer your question about the traffic study, it takes into account anything currently, anything beyond that it doesn't take into account.

Vice Chair Moloughney; into consideration of all of this, we have come back to the default action is you already have an approved development with a large number units, the delta of this proposal of what has already been approved is you can put a shovel in the ground tomorrow.

Mr. Easton; explained that the previous proposal is not functional now due to changes and that is the reason they are revising what they want to do, things have changed from 2004 to 2023.

Vice Chair Moloughney; As a skeptic to start with, why do you even need this. You just want to increase your density, if bedroom counts, traffic counts come together for me, but this a chance to revisit a project that was approved, 17 years ago and then 11 years ago there were some lessons learned and maybe there is a chance to modify this collectively. You need some interior and realignments, are there places where we can do a better job with the site layout and the traffic and planning and make this work better for all.

Member Nadeau; it effects the whole Delaware run, you can't isolate this building. I think we need to look at the future there are other parcels on that, that will be looking to increase the density, so. It's more global than just this project.

Vice Chair Moloughney; yes but let's just say the original design did have some flaws, do they build the original with the flaws and all or try to refine some of that.

Mr. Easton; the reason we went to the PDD is the zoning code at the time didn't allow this type of use. Certainly the new zoning code allows this type of use.

Vice Chair Moloughney; one other question I have is about green space. 34% green space in your revised, is that the total of the entire parcel, I can't see on that southern piece how you have 30% green space.

Mr. Easton; it is the entire parcel that is how the PDD was set up.

Vice Chair Moloughney; 42% down to 34%

Chair Carroll; what is required?

Vice Chair Moloughney; it is PDD so it is negotiable.

Vice Chair Moloughney; so the lose of green space is the infill of the parking

Mr. Easton; it takes into account that and things are a little different, on the original this parking lot (sketch) wasn't here.

Vice Chair Moloughney; in terms of the public access to that waterfront, is any of that parking currently set aside or established?

Joe Seman-Graves; to my knowledge there is no easement on the property yet.

Vice Chair Moloughney; so no access yet so that is something we would want to ask for

Mr. Easton; this is very similar to the 70 Delaware project we have 5 or 6 parking stalls dedicated to the city easement on top of it and everything else from the access going down. Those are things that the PDD process or the site plan process can address.

Vice Chair Moloughney; Joe that would be in line with the larger master plan right? Continuous water front access

Joe Seman-Graves; the goal is to have direct access to Matson shipyard from this property

Chair Carroll; any other questions? Being none he opened it up to public comments

Ms. Susanne Muir from Admirals Walk; I was just looking for the documents everyone is referring to I had downloaded it from a previous set of meetings, but for me living at Admirals Walk I am just concerned about infrastructure, like is the water going to be sufficient. There's another parcel on this side of Ontario Street on the market for \$850,000 and I'm guessing somebody is going to want to develop that to take advantage of the riverfront, so we always have to be thinking about electric, public utilities, water, that is what I am concerned about.

Joe Seman-Graves; I can address that. The next step would be for us to contract out to a third-party engineer for them to look at this. Technically, with the initial units here on Delaware Ave, there would be sufficient sewer and water but anything after that they would have to do major upgrades to the pump station. Not to say if there is sufficient electricity, that would be National Grid, but they should have sufficient electricity.

Mr. Easton explained to Ms. Muir the existing water line, when they started the project it was 6" line and they installed an 8" line to help with the flow of water.

Mr. Bob Bucher Admirals Walk; the project we know why they want more density, it is a developers math formula, it is fine but we think the project has room for improvement and we developed a list that we would like to present to the planning board meeting of things, that are not unreasonable just some things that we think will improve the quality of that project and over the entire waterfront project down to 70 Delaware, so we will be presenting that at the next meeting. Chair Carroll; thank you, any other public comments? Being none public comment portion was closed. Moving on to business at hand is to initiate a technical review by CHA. Is that by motion?

Vice Chair Moloughney; do we need a resolution?

Sharon; yes

Vice Chair Moloughney; the understanding we are establishing the escrow account for project review. And the dollar amount is \$15,000?

Mr. Easton; \$15,000 to start estimate being \$30,000

Chair Carroll; ok do we have a motion to accept....

Member Nadeau; what is it for? What is the motion?

Sharon; the motion is to set up the escrow account

Chair Carroll; an escrow account for the engineering study by CHA. So do we hear a motion?

Motion made a motion to approve the establishment of an escrow account for the engineering study on 6 Delaware Avenue Captain's Lookout to be completed by CHA (Clough Harbor Associates). Initial amount of deposit to be \$15,000 applicant will submit a check to the City so said escrow account can be set up. Additional funds will be submitted to the City to pay any and all invoices from CHA for said project. Motion was 2nd by Vice Chair Moloughney motion passed unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member Nadeau	X	
Member McCormick	X	
Member D'Angelico	X	

Chair Carroll; asked if there was any other business at hand to discuss

Joe Seman-Graves; explained to the board that if they have any opinions about the project they should be submitted sooner than later, because now an investment has been made and the applicant will have to go to the City Council again.

Chair Carroll; I would like to wait until the engineering review comes out and then we can start talking about concessions, additions, amendments to your proposal.

Vice Chair Moloughney; as a point of clarification to me, you mentioned going back to the Council. I guess procedurally would we be looking at reaching some final consensus resolution that as amended by our dialog back and forth with the developer that is what we would forward to the council to approve or deny it at that point, right?

Joe Seman-Graves; I think you can definitely make some changes post council approval, but I think they should have a good understanding of major changes versus an easement I don't know if they are going to look at stormwater much.

Vice Chair Moloughney; We would go back to the council just once is my question.

Joe Seman-Graves; it would come back to you after the council. The council will give a yes or no on the amendment then it would come back to you, you will both have the site plan at that point.

Mr. Easton; if there is anything else you wanted added it is better to be known now so that correction can be shown versus everything that you may want to see not being in there and it becomes part of the process.

Chair Carroll; ok do I have a motion to adjourn the meeting? Motion made to adjourn the meeting was made by Member Nadeau 2nd by Vice Chair Moloughney motion carried unanimously.

	YES	NO
Chairperson Carroll	X	
Vice Chair Moloughney	X	
Member Nadeau	X	

Member McCormick	X	
Member D'Angelico	X	

Meeting adjourned at 7:16PM

Submitted by:

Sharon Butler

Secretary

DRAFT