

Central Square Advisory Committee

c/o Community Development Department
344 Broadway, Cambridge, MA 02139
Liza Paden, 617/349-4647

November 10, 2016

Case: Mass+Main, PB#321

Applicant: Watermark Central Venture, LLC

Proposal and Zoning Issues: The proposal is to construct 283 dwelling units and ground floor retail. The proposal is located in the Central Square Overlay District and within the Mass and Main Residential Mixed Income Subdistrict outlined in Section 20.307 of the Zoning Ordinance. The proposal requires Planning Board approval pursuant to Sections 19.20 Project Review, 22.33.2 Special Permit for Functional Green Roof Area and 10.40 Special Permit criteria.

Central Square Advisory Committee Meeting: November 2, 2016

Summary: The applicant presented the site plans, building elevations and explained the operation of the buildings. Details were presented about the retail alley, the residential lobbies and the plaza area. The Committee discussed how the retail would operate, the sizes and the possible conflicts between hours of activity and the new and existing residents of the area and how the community focused retail could be achieved. The Columbia Street retail potential was reviewed and the differences from the Mass and Main retail discussed. The retail will not be traditional destination retail. It was described as "discoverable" retail spaces with low barriers to local retailers. The recently filed Central Square Restorative Petition and this proposal was discussed. Construction is scheduled to begin in March of 2017 and expected to take 2 years.

CSAC comments:

There is a desire to explore retail use(s) for the youth of the neighborhood and something that would be engaging for families. The Margaret Fuller House, Tutoring Plus and Winn Associates were suggested sources of information.

Tall buildings should be interesting to look at from a distance finished with distinctive tops and this one was considered to be very plain.

The creation of the retail alley is interesting as a shift to being a positive connection rather than an undesirable problem. The hours of operation and a lighting plan need to accommodate all users.

The windbreak in the retail alley should be sculptural taking into account snow loads.

Some members feel that the overall design is lacking, flat and/or bland and should be more special than the changes of materials portray.

Members felt that overall the proposal was good and that it integrates well into Central Square, and took into account much of what is in the C2K2 studies.

The event space needs to be developed further to maintain a flexible space for a variety of activities. The density and the housing are both strongly supported.

CSAC members in attendance: M Greene, C. SolGully, R. Winters, D. Kane, E. Hanig, M. Monestime, and J. Alstein.

Respectfully Submitted for the Committee,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Liza Paden". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Liza Paden
Community Development Department staff