



City of Somerville, Massachusetts

Condominium Review Board

Katjana Ballantyne, Mayor

Monday, March 25, 2024

6:00 pm.

Staff Board Member

Morena Zelaya

Staff Liaison & Housing Policy Coordinator

Board Members

Zachary Zasloff, Chair

Kate Byrne, Vice-chair

Elizabeth Champion

Alix Simeon

Jennifer Tsolas

Meeting Minutes

March 25, 2024 – 6:00 PM

Virtual Hearing

Board Members present: Zachary Zasloff; Kate Byrne; Alix Simeon; Jennifer Tsolas

Staff present: Morena Zelaya

Chair Zasloff convened the meeting at 6:00 PM. He read the following information aloud: Pursuant to Chapter 107 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting of the Condominium Review Board will be conducted via remote participation. We will post an audio recording, audio-video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of these proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting on the City of Somerville website and local cable access government channels

CONDO REVIEW BOARD MEETING AGENDA

1. MEETING CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order with a call for attendance made by Chair Zasloff.

Responses were as follows:

Chair Zasloff	Present
Vice-chair Byrne	Present
Member Champion	Absent
Member Simeon	Present but entered late
Member Tsolas	Present

With four in attendance there was a quorum, and the meeting was called to order.

1. NEW BUSINESS

a. APPLICATIONS FOR FINAL/COURTESY CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION PERMITS

WARD 5 PRECINCT 1

207 Highland Ave

Application of 207 Highland Realty, LLC, Tony Barros. Seeking a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 207 Highland Avenue. Mike Cohen attended as representative for the applicant and he informed the board that the final required documents had been submitted and that they were seeking the final permit as a result.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board comments; with no questions or comments, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; Mr. Ronald Cavallo requested to speak in support of the application and all the other applicants before the board that evening. He expressed his displeasure with the ordinance as he felt it causes economic harm to the city. The chair thanked him for his comments and with no other requests to speak the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 207 Highland Avenue.

WARD 3 PRECINCT 3

37 Harvard Street

Application of 37 Harvard Street, LLC, Lucas Mendes Garcia & James Douglas. Seeking a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 37 Harvard Street Street. Attorney Jim Maher attended to speak on the application. He stated that the outstanding documentation, the master deed and property condition report, had now been submitted and that they were seeking the final conversion permit.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board comments; with no questions or comments, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; Mike Cohen thanked the board for their issuance of the final permit on the preceding item and said he was in favor of the current item being issued a final permit as well. There were no further comments and the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 37 Harvard Street.

WARD 1 PRECINCT 4

8 Melvin Street, Unit #3

Application of Winter Hill Realty Trust, Senthil Kumar. Seeking a Final Conversion permit for Unit #3 at 8 Melvin Street. Attorney Anne Vigorito attended as representative for the applicant. She stated that the final items necessary, the master deed and property condition report, had been submitted to the board.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board; he asked if the third unit was added as a result to the recent change due to MBTA Communities. Attorney Vigorito responded that while the third unit was already existing it had been necessary to walk through the 2nd unit to get to the third. The change brought on by MBTA Communities made it possible for the owners to completely separate the unit. Seeing no further questions, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 3-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion permit for Unit #3 at 8 Melvin Street.

WARD 3 PRECINCT 3

24-26 Pitman Street

Application of Michael Petipas. Seeking a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 24-26 Pitman Street. Attorney Anne Vigorito attended as representative for the applicant. She stated that the final items necessary, the master deed and property condition report, had been submitted to the board.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board; Vice-chair Byrne asked to confirm that relocation fees were paid, Attorney Vigorito confirmed that they were but there was some delay. Board staff informed the board that the owner dropped checks off to City Annex offices and one of the tenants picked theirs up in person, the other tenant received theirs via certified mail. With no further questions, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 4-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 24-26 Pitman Street.

WARD 6 PRECINCT 2

234 Willow Avenue

Application of Joseph & Melaney Fodera. Seeking a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 234 Willow Avenue. Attorney Anne Vigorito attended as representative for the applicant. She stated that the final items necessary, the master deed and property condition report, had been submitted to the board. She

also informed the board that previous tenants at the property had been relocated to another property owned by the applicants and would not be moving back to their original unit.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board; Vice-chair Byrne asked for clarification on the status of the tenants, Attorney Vigorito confirmed that relocation payments had been made but that the tenants were staying at a nearby property also owned by the applicants. With no further questions, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 4-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Final Conversion permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 234 Willow Avenue.

b. APPLICATIONS FOR PRELIMINARY CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION PERMITS

WARD 5 PRECINCT 3

107 Josephine Avenue

Application of 107 Josephine Ave LLC, Carlos Pereira. Seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 and Unit #2 at 107 Josephine Avenue. Carlos Pereira, the Manager of the LLC, attended and spoke on the application. He informed the board that property was previously owner-occupied but became vacant years ago, was purchased vacant and remains so. He listed the items included with the application for both permits.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board; seeing none, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; seeing none, the floor was closed.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 4-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To grant a Preliminary Non-Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1 & Unit #2 at 107 Josephine Avenue.

WARD 2 PRECINCT 4

21-23 Kent Court

Application of Beantown LLC, Julian Lewis. Seeking a Preliminary Rental Conversion Permit for Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 21-23 Kent Court. Julian Lewis and Maxwell Shortsleeve, the managers of the LLC, attended and spoke on the application. He listed the documentation that was included with the application and stated the property was purchased vacant and remained that way.

He explained all the outreach attempts that had been made towards the former tenants and the proof of such that was included in the application.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to Board; the board had a lengthy discussion and numerous questions for the applicants regarding the property history and outreach that was done to tenants. The managers explained to the board that the property had been purchased vacant after a roof failure due to rain in Summer 2023 had caused it to become uninhabitable. All three units had previously been tenant occupied, and the prior owner had decided not to rehabilitate the building after the flooding and instead sold it to the applicants. Tenants, who had previously been told by the prior owner that the property would be repaired, were no longer able to return to their units. The applicants then purchased the property vacant. With no further questions, the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff opened the floor to public comment; a former tenant, Deb Azrael wished to speak. She explained that while she understood that the current owners did not do anything wrong, that it had been very difficult to uproot her life from her unit of 40 years so suddenly. She was upset at the former owner for not fixing the property and wanted to express her feelings to the board. The board asked further questions of her to confirm the timeline of events, after which the floor was closed.

Chair Zasloff reopened the floor for board discussion at which he proposed the board table the application in hopes that the applicants and the Ms. Azrael could reach an amicable resolution to compensate her for her 40 year tenure being ended so suddenly.

On a motion duly made a roll call vote was called and it was voted 4-0:

Chair Zasloff - yes

Vice-chair Byrne – yes

Member Simeon- yes

Member Tsolas- yes

To table the application of Beantown LLC, Julian Lewis, for Preliminary Rental Conversion Permits for Unit #1, Unit #2, & Unit #3 at 21-23 Kent Court

ADJOURN

Chair Zasloff motioned to adjourn at 7:32 pm which Vice-chair Byrne seconded. The meeting was adjourned.