



Design Review Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 8, 2025
7:30 p.m.

Board Members:

Mark Gluesing, Board Chair (P)
Steve Dornbusch, Board Member (P)
Susan Opton, Board Member (P)
Haril Pandya, Board Member (P)
Felix Zemel, Board Member (P)

Elisa Litchman, Administrative Specialist, Planning & Community Development (P)

Mark Gluesing, Chair, called the meeting to order on September 8, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. He reviewed the remote meeting procedures.

Applicants & Attendees:

1. Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs Inc., representing Hyannis Port Research
2. Joe Garber, Riverside Community Care
3. Walter Sullivan, Sullivan & Comerford, P.C. representing Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center
4. Tim Sullivan, Goulston & Storrs representing Greystar Development East, LLC

Agenda Item 1:

Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs Inc., representing Hyannis Port Research located at 400 First Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for signage.

Gary McCoy, Poyant Signs Inc., representing Hyannis Port Research, explained that the proposal is for a halo-illuminated set of channel letters that will match the existing TripAdvisor sign. The sign is less than 100 s.f. and will be installed on the screening system on the building.

Chair Gluesing stated that the proposed sign is not measured the way that is required by the Board. Signs should be measured from the outer box around the whole limit. This sign actually measures a hair over 100 s.f. Mr. McCoy stated that the way he calculated the sign in the same process as was carried out for the other recent signs on this building. Mr. Zemel noted that he was Chairing the meeting when the TripAdvisor sign was discussed, which may have led to the acceptance of the alternate way of calculating the sign area. He agreed that the brightness level and whiteness of the sign lighting should match the other signs on the building. As the other sign was approved in this way, the Chair concurred.

Mr. Pandya agreed that the sign parameters should be confirmed. He would like to make sure the proposed lighting matches the other signs on the building.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the sign for Hyannis Port Research, 400 First Avenue, as submitted. Felix Zemel – aye; Haril Pandya – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Motion passed 5-0-0.

Agenda Item 2:

Joe Garber, Riverside Community Care located at 237 Highland Avenue, Needham, MA, and applying for exterior alterations.

Joe Garber, Riverside Community Care, explained that the proposal is to complete some renovations to the front of 237 Highland Avenue. The existing elevated concrete walkway on the front of the building are crumbling and in severe deterioration. The stairs attached to the front were previously replaced with precast steps along with some railings. The proposal is to remove the elevated platform and install three separate sets of precast stairs. These will be ADA compliant for height and depth of the treads, and the handrails. Future funding for greenery along the stairs may be sought, but there is no easy way to water it. The existing bushes along the front will be removed.

Chair Gluesing expressed concern that the railings may not meet code. Mr. Garber stated that he has reviewed the proposal with the Building Inspector and did not hear any similar concerns. Mr. Zemel agreed that balusters will need to be included in the plans.

Ms. Opton suggested that decorative stone or a different landscape material could be used in place of plantings, if they would not be able to be watered. Mr. Garber stated that some mulch could be placed in between the stairs, as there is not currently a budget for any landscaping.

Mr. Pandya expressed concern with waterproofing the wall after removal of the platform. Any gaps that expose the steel beams should be waterproofed. Mr. Garber stated that these areas will be sealed.

Mr. Zemel suggested an approval with a condition that the applicant return with a shrubbery or landscape plan to be approved and implemented by next summer. In this way, the aesthetic concerns will be addressed.

Chair Gluesing stated that it is difficult to evaluate the design when it is clear that the railings will need to be changed. There will need to be code compliant railings. He expressed concern regarding finishing the lower part of the wall with veneer brick or artificial stucco. Also, mulch will need to be installed prior to the applicant coming back in the spring with a landscape plan.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Dornbusch and seconded by Ms. Opton, it was voted to approve the changes to the stairways at 237 Highland Avenue, Riverside Community Care, with the conditions that the lower wall and the area where the deck is removed be patched with either brick veneer or stucco and that the final product be submitted to the Board prior to installation, and that mulch be installed on the ground area and by May 30, 2026, the applicant return with a

plan for landscaping the front area. Felix Zemel – aye; Haril Pandya – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Motion passed 5-0-0.

Agenda Item 3:

Walter Sullivan, Sullivan & Comerford, P.C. representing Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center to be located at 1195 Central Avenue and applying for site plan review.

Mr. Zemel recused himself from this item.

Rabbi Krinsky, Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Center, stated that the Center has been in the Town for over 20 years working out of a small house on High Rock St. More space is needed for the Center's programming and celebrations to serve the community. The proposed location at 1195 Central Avenue is ideal due to its size and location.

Karlis Skulte, CEC, explained that the property has an existing residential home which is in a state of disrepair. The Rabbi has spoken with neighbors to obtain feedback and coordination and has spoken with the Town, including the Conservation Commission. The wetlands on the site have been delineated. There are bordering vegetated wetlands located in the southwest corner of the site. These extend adjacent to the nearby baseball fields. The associated buffer zones have been applied to the design of the project. The applicant will be working with the Conservation Commission throughout this process. The site slopes from Central Ave. towards the rear wetlands. There has been some geotechnical investigation completed to identify preliminary areas for stormwater management on the site as well as the groundwater height. The main building is proposed at the center of the site frontage, with a smaller building toward the rear. This will be the residence to serve the Rabbi and his family. There will be one-way circulation on the site, along with a few parking spaces for the congregation. The one-way drive aisle will wrap around the building. The width of the drive has been verified for a delivery vehicle. The plan includes a sidewalk connection along the entry portion of the drive. The plan shows a stormwater management basin between the existing walkway on Central Ave. and the front of the building, along with a smaller basin behind the residential home at the rear of the site. A 25' No Disturb buffer to the wetlands will be maintained and the applicant will provide additional mitigation plantings to replicate some of the wetlands that are currently grass. These areas will be revegetated into a native wetland and supplemented with additional plantings in coordination with the Conservation Commission. The plan identifies space for dumpsters in between the residence and the Center. This will be a fully fenced enclosure. There will be a 4' pond at the front of the site which would connect the runoff from the roof of the building and discharge it back to the existing wetland on the west side of the property. On the east side of the building, there will be a sloped driveway with access to the main floor of the building. This will allow for pedestrian connectivity and egress movement. The lower level of the building will have gently sloping access from the entry drive at Central Ave. to the lower level of the building. The residence will be at the same elevation approximately as the lower level of the Center. A preliminary utility plan identifies space for proposed transformers to serve the building adjacent to the entry drive along Central Ave.

Alan Westman, KSID Architecture, explained that the proposed residence will be a two story structure with an attic space creating the third floor for storage purposes. Due to high

groundwater conditions and proximity to the wetlands, it is not possible to have a basement. The residence consists of a two car garage. The Center will consist of three stories. In an effort to minimize grading and retaining walls, the building will be used for as much retaining as possible. A covered pergola is proposed on the top floor, along with an outdoor deck. A flat roof is proposed for the building. The material of the residence is proposed to be a nickel gap siding, in either a cementitious fiber cement board or a wood clapboard material. The tower piece where the stairwell is located will be a lightly textured stucco material with a large expanse of windows or curtainwall. There will be coated aluminum canopies over the garage and the front entrance, and a small deck on the residence which will be stained wood. The front of the Center is proposed to be wrapped in Jerusalem stone for the first two floors. The third floor steps back and will be a smooth textured stucco with an aluminum coated roof canopy. Along the south side of the building, materials are proposed that relate to other materials in the neighborhood, such as nickel gap siding. The two main colors being proposed for the Center are Sherwin-Williams Storm Cloud and a blue-gray color. The residence will be Origami White and the stucco above the Jerusalem stone would be matte painted to match the Jerusalem stone color. Trees will remain between the ballfield and the building. The landscape plan will work with local deciduous and evergreen trees, with plantings added to the wetland buffer and other large shrubs for screening. The final design concept for signage has not yet been considered.

Chair Gluesing asked the square footage of the Center. Mr. Westman stated that the total gross square footage is 24,880. The residence is 6453 gross s.f. The attic space will be approximately 2,400 s.f. The footprint of the residence is approximately 3,135 s.f. The entire site is 43,567 s.f.

Chair Gluesing asked the building height from grade. Mr. Westman stated that the residence is 32.5' at its tallest height above grade. The Central Ave side of the Center will be 37' high above grade at its highest point, and the back will be 42.5' above grade, as the property slopes down.

Rabbi Krinsky stated that he has spoken to the neighbor to the north who seemed in support of the project. A meeting is also planned with the other neighbors.

Mr. Pandya asked about parking for the site. Mr. Skulte explained that there were discussions with the Town and the Superintendent of Schools regarding parking at a nearby school for the site. The site has been designed for circular drop-off, with parking then at the school and access via the sidewalk on Central Ave. Rabbi Krinsky stated that there is a verbal agreement for use of the school parking area outside of school hours.

Ms. Opton asked the number of people that could be onsite during certain events. Mr. Westman stated that the social hall can accommodate approximately 120 people, and the sanctuary could accommodate approximately 100 people. Rabbi Krinsky noted that these two places are not used at the same time. People move from one area to the next. Ms. Opton asked about signage for those having to park elsewhere.

Ms. Opton noted that the landscape plan is incomplete with some of the plant species not identified and included on the plan. She would like to see a more complete plan. She asked about the proposed infiltration pond plantings. Mr. Skulte stated that this area would normally be loam and seeded. Ms. Opton suggested meadow plantings or wild marsh plantings. Chair Gluesing

stated that this would be a nice way to add softening to the short setback to the building façade. An installation like this was done successfully at Olin College. Mr. Skulte noted that the profile of the stormwater management system is limited due to the high water table, but these proposals will be considered.

In response to a question from Mr. Dornbusch, Mr. Westman stated that there is some discussion still to be had with neighbors and abutters. He believes the applicant will have all of the necessary conversations.

Chair Gluesing stated that the property is not large enough for the two buildings proposed and there could be issues with the wetlands on the site. As the back areas is already a large lawn, he asked if building in the 25' buffer could be considered in terms of the building placement. If the applicant is proposing to not comply with other setback requirements, it is unclear why the wetland setback is being observed. Mr. Skulte stated that the wetlands consultant has met with the Town's Conservation Agent, and it seemed that the 25' No Disturb buffer needs to be preserved in order to get through the Conservation Commission process. There have been discussions with the adjacent abutter to the north to make sure that the buffering and screening needed will be feasible. Chair Gluesing stated that the elevation change on the site seems to be quite significant.

Mr. Pandya asked about outdoor gathering spaces proposed. Mr. Westman stated that there is no formal outdoor gathering space proposed, as there is not much space left. There are four smaller gathering spaces proposed within the building. Bollards, or other low lighting, is proposed around the circular drive. There will be some downlighting on the building itself. The intention is to create a lit glow from inside the building at the glazed entry hall.

Mr. Pandya stated that he believes the building is sited well and the proposed buildings feel in keeping with the area. He suggested accent lighting some of the Jerusalem stone on the building. On the upper level roof deck, the applicant could also consider some low level plantings to help screen the activities and provide privacy. Plantings and material choices may help bring the building scale down.

Chair Gluesing stated that the massing of the Center is well done, and the proposal includes elegant materials. The massing for the proposed residence seems large and he would prefer to see a smaller third floor massing. He suggested a mixing in of an alternate material on the north and west façades of the residence building. The applicant noted that it faces a wetland and is mostly not seen.

The Board stated that it would forward comments to the Planning Board.

Agenda Item 4:

Tim Sullivan, Goulston & Storrs representing Greystar Development East, LLC applying for redevelopment of 100 West Street and site plan review.

Tim Sullivan, Goulston & Storrs representing Greystar Development East, LLC, explained that the owner of the property has an agreement with Greystar Development East, LLC to be the

developer of the site for multifamily housing under the new MBTA Communities zoning. This project falls within the by-right scenario of this zoning and the Site Plan is compliant. The project includes 189 units in a three-story building, with a 1.1 floor area ratio (FAR). The project will utilize the existing curb cuts on the site. The Planning Board has been applied to and there will be a public hearing next Tuesday.

Timothy Beinert, Greystar Development East, LLC, explained that this site is across from a train station. The site has good walkability, allowing future residents to live in a suburban setting without sacrificing convenience. The design tries to maximize on the location while also fitting within the context of the greater surrounding area. The building will be a wood frame, slab on grade surface, with differentiated setbacks to create articulation and depth. There will be direct access to units on the ground floor which will create a boutique feel and activate Highland Avenue.

Tom Lassy, Cube3, stated that this property is in a multifamily residential district which has a 70% street setback frontage requirement. The proposal is for a 700' building which stretches down Highland Ave. The project is seen as a bridge between a residential area and a commercial area. The design shows angled and vertical elevation elements to break down the massing and create a residential scale feel. The materials at the West Street end will wrap the corner of the building and bays will be created to tie back onto Highland Avenue. The design is for two visual approaches to the building that meet in the middle. The bays have been angled to create vertical lines and break up the scale of the long horizontal building. At the pedestrian level there will be small canopies with vertical wood paneling to create a vertical element and break up the horizontal element. A node will be created in-between the two sections to be a bridge between the two neighborhood styles. The building will be recessed at the first floor to allow people down at the pedestrian level to be able to look inside the courtyard areas.

Mr. Sullivan explained that there is a requirement that only 30% of the building can exceed the maximum setback. The current building is a flat façade, running the whole way along Highland. The proposed façade has 30% of the building set back further with open spaces to break up the building. This was discussed during the MBTA Communities process and the Planning Board mentioned that it would like to see the entrances to the residences along the street as a way to activate the streetscape. Although the building has a long façade, there will be a lot of building design elements activating the streetscape. Mr. Beinert stated that the intention is to maximize green space for future residents.

Jay Emporer, Bohler, stated that the entry for the building on Highland Avenue will be a break between the two building masses. There will be a courtyard with seating and vegetation. There will be steps and a slightly sloped walkway to access the area. There will be light spilling out from inside the building and lighting in the landscape using bollards and downlighting of the trees. There will be movable furniture for the residents to use. Some ground floor units will open onto that space. Street trees will be located on the inner side of the sidewalk, along the building façade. The sidewalk will have continuous plantings and trees against the building. Along West Street, there will be an access point for the building and a planting strip. The plant palette is still being developed but will include a majority of native trees and perennial shrubs. There will be courtyards facing west for the residents, opening into the main amenity area of the

building. There will be a courtyard with a pergola and some dining tables. There will also be a park on the south end of the site, utilizing existing green spaces and a walking path for residents. There may also be a community garden which would be fenced off.

Mr. Dornbusch asked about buffering between the south parking lot and the building. Mr. Emperor stated that there could be additional plantings included as screening. Mr. Dornbusch asked about site lighting. Mr. Emperor stated that there will be full lighting for the parking area and some accent lighting in the courtyards.

Mr. Zemel stated that there will likely be many discussions regarding this proposal at upcoming Planning Board meetings.

Ms. Opton asked about walled in garden entrances to the ground level units. Mr. Emperor stated that there will be small patios outside the doors and walkways to the public sidewalk. The area between the units will be heavily planted.

Ms. Opton noted that pin oaks may drop a lot of acorns onto the site and could be reconsidered as a planting species. There is not a lot of landscaping in the west parking area. She asked if there will be any softening of the landscape there. She noted that the ground floor units on that side seem to open directly to the parking lot with only a sidewalk buffer. Mr. Lassy stated that the entrances may be pushed in a bit to give relief at the sidewalk edge.

Ms. Opton asked about screening from the railway. Mr. Emperor stated that an existing fence there will be replaced. There may be some space for narrow tree plantings as well. Ms. Opton suggested a planter along the railway area in order to create some taller planting heights.

Ms. Opton stated that any softened angles for the building would be nice to consider.

Mr. Pandya stated that recessing some of the entry points would be appropriate. He stated that the white tone for the building color could be difficult. It would be nice to determine ways to break up the color palette. Mr. Pandya suggested that some cornice work could help to break up the homogeneity of height in the building. The applicant team agreed that this would continue to be refined.

Chair Gluesing noted that there is not much landscaping within the parking area, and he suggested clustering some of the parking in order to allow for additional screening/landscaping.

Ms. Opton suggested a planter along the railway area in order to create some planting heights.

Mr. Dornbusch asked about the unit mix. Mr. Beinert stated that there will be 16% studio units, 44% one-bedroom units, 31% two-bedroom units, and 9% three-bedroom units.

Mr. Pandya suggested lights coming down from the entryways, instead of sconce lights. He suggested looking into heat island effects for the proposed parking area and associated photovoltaic items. Mr. Lassy stated that this will be a passive house construction level project.

Mr. Emperor stated that the parking proposed is at a 1:1 ratio and there is not much area left to minimize the impact of the parking lot.

The Board stated that it would forward comments to the Planning Board.

REVIEW

Minutes of 8/11/2025 minutes

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Mr. Dornbusch, it was voted to approve the meeting minutes of August 11, 2025. Felix Zemel – aye; Haril Pandya – aye; Susan Opton – abstain; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Motion passed 4-0-1.

Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Zemel and seconded by Mr. Dornbusch, it was voted to adjourn at 10:15 p.m. Felix Zemel – aye; Haril Pandya – aye; Susan Opton – aye; Steve Dornbusch – aye; Mark Gluesing – aye; Motion passed 5-0-0.

Next Public Meeting – September 29, 2025 at 7:30pm