



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

The Planning Board of the City of Cambridge will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 21, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the second floor meeting room, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, Cambridge, Massachusetts on a zoning petition by Chestnut Hill Realty to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Cambridge, Section 20.600 Basement Housing Overlay District by including language to clarify the intent of the provisions to apply to multifamily structures that are wholly or partially located in Residence C, C-1, C-1A, C-2A, C-2B, C-3, C-3A, or C-3B base zoning districts.

The purpose of the Basement Housing Overlay District, as currently described in the Zoning Ordinance, is to allow for the creation of studio or one-bedroom apartment units in appropriate unused basement level space of certain existing multifamily residential buildings that have one or more existing basement level apartment units. The regulations are meant to promote the maintenance and improvement of older buildings, including improved stormwater and wastewater management, and provide additional housing without building new structures or increasing the size of existing structures. The Overlay District includes the corridor along Massachusetts Avenue between Harvard Square and Porter Square.

The substantive proposed changes are summarized below:

- Adding the words “wholly or partially” when referring to the location of a structure within a Residence C, C-1, C-1A, C-2A, C-2B, C-3, C-3A, or C-3B base zoning district.
- Adding the following sentence to Section 20.620, Paragraph (d), regarding Applicability: “Portions of those structures that meet the applicability requirements set forth above that are not located within a Residence C family zoning district would be treated for all dimensional and use requirements as if wholly located within a Residence C family zoning district.”
- Adding the word “dimensional” so that the second sentence of Section 20.630, Paragraph (b) reads: “However, no nonconforming dimensional element or aspect of the existing structure shall be extended or increased, with the exception that the permitted lot area per dwelling unit may be decreased, and incursions into setback areas may be approved by the Planning Board only for the purpose of providing or altering window wells or egress stairs as may be deemed advisable in response to safety and flooding concerns.
- Adding the following new Section 20.660: “Notwithstanding the base district in which any part of the structure is located, the entirety of any structure that meets the applicability requirements of Section 20.620 and that is in the Basement Housing Overlay District shall be eligible for the special permit created by this Section 20.600. Where any proposed dwelling units in that structure are to be located in any portion of the structure that is in a base zone in which the use would not otherwise be allowed, or would not be allowed without separate approval under Article 8, those dwelling units shall be eligible to be allowed pursuant to a Special Permit under this Section 20.600 and upon the grant of that Special Permit shall be allowed without need for approval under Article 8 or the grant of any variance or additional zoning approvals.”

Copies of this petition are on file in the Office of the City Clerk, City Hall, Cambridge, Massachusetts and at the Community Development Department, 344 Broadway and online at www.cambridgema.gov/cdd/zoninganddevelopment/zoning/amendments . Questions concerning the petition may be addressed to Liza Paden at 617/349-4647 or lpaden@cambridgema.gov.

The City of Cambridge does not discriminate on the basis of disability. The City of Cambridge will provide reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities upon request. Please make requests for alternative formats at least two weeks in advance by contacting Liza Paden, Planning Board staff, at 617 349 4647, lpaden@cambridgema.gov.