



Town of West Boylston
140 Worcester Street, West Boylston, Massachusetts 01583

Select Board/Sewer Commission Meeting Minutes

Date / Time / Location of Meeting
December 13, 2022; 6:00 p.m.
120 Prescott Street
West Boylston, MA 01583
Meeting Room

Members Present:
Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Chairman
Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chairman
Marc Frieden, Clerk
Patrick J. Crowley, Selectman
Kristina Pedone, Selectwoman

Members NOT Present:

Invited Guests:
Jennifer Warren-Dymont Town Administrator
Faye Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

Others Present: See attached sign in sheet.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barur Rajeshkumar gave an overview of the process for a LIP and how the night's meeting will be conducted.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Local Initiative Program (LIP) Proposal:**
 - 235-245 West Boylston Street, Branded Realty Group III, LLC (Developer)
Matthew Doyle introduced himself and explained they are a local building and were originally considering a mixed-use project at 235-245 West Boylston Street. He explained they are proposing 64 units of apartments with 10% being 3-bedroom units with remaining mix to be mostly 2 bedrooms due to demand. He stated with the 40B requirement of 20% of the units at the 60% of average median income of the region or 25% of the units at 80% of average median income. He stated they would most likely have a mix of income requirements. He explained this LIP process is in coordination with the town and will need to meet with all town board and commissions and community input. He stated this property sits on 5.37 acres with frontage on two public roads 400 feet on Route 12 and 400 feet on Pierce Street. He stated this mixed-use property will feature business in the front and residential in the back. Patrick Healy with Thompson and Associates introduced himself as engineer for this project. He presented the proposed site plan and a concept set of plans of building and a overview of what the site may contain for buildings, parking and landscaping. Mr. Doyle stated they have been in contact with MA Housing Development about this project and they are interested in being involved in this project. Mr. Healy stated they acknowledge the need for more senior housing in town are open to working with town on

this need. Mr. Healy stated they has researched the income standards and explained what the rent costs could be in these units. Mr. Doyle stated they try to offer market rent 10% below local market to allow for less rental turn over. Mr. Frieden asked about having an elevator in building, Mr. Doyle stated they will not be having a elevator and discussed the accessibility they plan to accommodate. Ms. Pedone asked about other projects they have completed, Mr. Healy stated they have not completed any affordable housing projects at this time. Mr. Berglund asked about partnership with MA Development, Mr. Doyle stated they seamed eager to work with them on this project. Mr. Frieden asked about current business tenants and if they will be located in new building, Mr. Doyle stated they would like to see them stay and move into the newly constructed site and would be preferred. Ms. Erin Palumbo asked about zoning, access to grocery store and public transportation. Mr. Doyle stated it is zoned for what they are proposing and the location has public transportation and grocery store nearby. State Representative James O'Day asked about ADA Compliance without the elevator, Mr. Doyle stated the ADA units would be located on the first floor. Ms. Lisa Novak suggested they consider elevators which would allow for more senior housing units. Mr. Berglund asked how much of the property is currently residential, Mr. Doyle stated zero is residential and plans to build two 10,000 square foot buildings in phases which would allow for the current businesses to remain open during the construction. Ms. Erin McKenzie stated her concerns with impact of traffic, Mr. Doyle stated they have not completed a traffic study at this time but will complete if the town accepts. Mr. David Hennessey asked about the percentage of units that will be affordable, Mr. Doyle stated that will depend on the mix of 80% or 60% Affordable Median Income. Mr. Frieden suggested speaking to other abutters about purchasing more property, Mr. Doyle stated they have been in contact and they may be in negotiation at this time.

- Local Initiative Program (LIP) Proposal:

- 73 West Boylston Street, Crescent Builders, LLC (Developer)

Mr. Dean Harrison, Housing Consultant for Mr. Ali introduced himself and presented the proposed project Mara Luxury Apartments to be located at 73 West Boylston Street. He explained the building is proposed to be three stories with 40 units to include 80 parking spaces (2 per unit). He stated on site to the east they would be keeping undeveloped. He explained 10 units (25%) would be 80% of the Affordable Median Income the other 30 units would be market price. He explained this project will include a Community Center and exercise room. He stated there will be 5% of units on are required to be handicap accessible per State Building Code and will be located on the first floor, residents will be able to request accommodations for specific units such as bathtub replaced with shower stall, grab bars. Mr. Harrison explained they would like the support of the Board and reviewed the application for the DHCD. He gave an overview of proposed rates based on the maximum allowable rates using 2022 income levels for rent per unit; 1 bedroom \$1,657, 2 bedroom \$1,990, 3 bedroom \$2,299. He explained they backout the utility allowance as residents pay utilities; 1 bedroom \$204, 2 bedroom \$294, 3 bedroom \$372 this would leave net maximum allowable rent of 1 bedroom \$1,453, 2 bedroom \$1,696, 3 bedroom \$1,297. He stated they do not have to use the maximum and may have lower rents. Mr. Harrison presented the 92 North Main Street rent rates and explained annually residents must verify their annual income. Mr. Frieden asked if they offered more expensive units would this allow for them to have more affordable units, Mr. Harrison stated they could possibly do that. Ms. Pedone asked if Ali has completed a friendly 40B project in the Town in the past, Mr. Ali stated he not but Mr. Harrison stated he has. Ms. Pedone asked about the trees being on the plan in the back, Mr. Ali stated they plan to leave the area undeveloped and be a barrier to the property behind. Ms. Pedone asked how many units will be affordable, Mr. Ali responded

25% of the units will be at the 80% affordable rate. Mr. Rucho asked which units will be affordable on the plans shown, Mr. Harrison stated they have not designated them yet but they will be equally distributed on floors and unit sizes. Ms. Jacqueline Leonardo asked if the Affordable Housing Trust has given a recommendation yet, Mr. Rajeshkumar stated they have not. She also asked if there has been a school feasibility study for all the complexes being proposed and to see that impact at the school level and how the current infrastructure will handle this. Mr. Ali stated at 92 North Main Street there are 6 or 7 students and there are 80 apartments at that location. Ms. Leonardo requested the Board take this into consideration. Ms. Leonardo asked the Board to consider that Mr. Ali has other projects in town that are not completed. Mr. Mark Hiliare asked the current state of the property currently, Mr. Ali stated it is the lot next to the cannabis store on West Boylston Street and is vacant. He asked if this development will be an enhancement or detriment to abutters, Mr. Ali stated all of his other properties have increased the value of the homes around it. Ms. Palumbo asked about zoning, access to grocery store and public transportation, Mr. Harrison stated it is zoned business and with density adjustment they are able to complete this project, and is next to Walmart and has available public transportation. Mr. Frieden asked about the property abutting that is residential, Mr. Ali is meeting with the owners but need engineers to comment. Mr. Frieden asked if they would add business space if they acquired more land, Mr. Ali stated he does not have experience in commercial and would most likely increase the project. Mr. Harrison stated they could possibly lease out commercial space or sell separately. Ms. Leonardo stated in the spring Mr. Ali proposed townhouses and asked why the change, Mr. Ali responded he was proposing that in the spring but the purchase cost of the lot is not beneficial to him. Mr. Harrison stated they will complete a traffic study and provide peer reviews of this project and are hopeful the town will accept this project to move forward in the process. Mr. Harrison stated it is hard to get financing and is helpful to get state funding for assistance but does not believe this project will meet the criteria. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated he has concerns with the Route 12 traffic and suggests they find an better access, Mr. Ali will work with traffic engineers.

- Local Initiative Program (LIP) Proposal:

- 18 Malden Street, SJV Investment, LLC (Developer)

Steve Venincasa introduced himself his nephew Jim Venincasa and John Grenier, JM Grenier Engineering. He stated they have a presentation of the site proposed and is only a conceptual plan at this time. He explained they are looking to work with the town and abutters to build a first class multi-family affordable project. He explained the site is 14.4 acres and fronts Malden Street and abuts to the east the school and a park on the other side of Newton Street. He stated they are proposing a three multi family residential building to include a clubhouse closest to Malden Street. He stated the plan is to cluster the buildings together in center of site to allow for more green space, walking paths. He stated they mixed in garages within the project. He stated the project proposed is 192 units consisting of 10% or 19 three bedroom units, 35% or 67 two bedroom and 55% or 106 1 bedroom but this mix could be altered. He explained 25% or 48 would be at 8% median income affordable housing. He stated they believe this is an appropriate location for this project and is designed for families. He explained they will have all services brought into the site so there will not be a septic system or public water source. Mr. Steve Venincasa gave some background of his experience in building projects such as this in Millbury and Boylston. Mr. Venincasa stated this project could accommodate 192 units for seniors or ADA required units, he explained they can alter the plans in working with the town and their needs. He explained they have development teams on staff. He explained this project may not have public transportation but it also is not a section 8 project. Mr. Venincasa emphasized they

are an residential building. Mr. Frieden stated in a prior meeting they stated they were building 192 units based on the economy and now they are claiming it is due to land space, Mr. Venincasa stated the acreage will allow for 300 units if that is what the town wanted. He stated they cannot go to low with the units but there is flexibility with the town. Mr. Frieden asked if they offered more expensive units would this allow for them to have more affordable units, Mr. Venincasa stated they have done that in other locations and feel all there units are premium and they may consider this. Mr. Rucho asked how many single family homes could be built on the property, Mr. Venincasa does not know. Ms. Jillian Hakins asked about the impact on the schools and does not feel the school has space for more kids and is already overpopulated. Mr. Venincasa responded he does not feel that this project will impact the schools and explained in projects in other towns do not typically have many kids and these projects attract singles or young adults but no guarantees. He stated if they built single family homes he believes that would attract more families. He stated they have met with the Parks Commission and are willing to make improvements to the park. Mr. Tom Zappa asked about the sewer access and extension would be needed, Mr. Grenier responded at intersection of Newton Street and or from Malden Street there would sewer extension required. Mr. Rajeshkumar stated the Sewer Commission has not taken any action on any sewer extensions. Mr. Venincasa stated as part of the application and process they would conduct sewer capacity studies. Natasha Montel asked how close are the other projects to schools and light noise will surround area. Mr. Venincasa stated this may attract people with children or maybe even teachers. Mr. Grenier stated in Boylston the project is within 1/8th of a mile and they do not have many children. Mr. Grenier stated they will address the lighting by using hooded lighting to keep lighting facing down. Mr. David Hennesey asked about a sewer connection being required who is paying for it and also he has concerns with water run off with Malden Brook and Edwards Pond which feeds the reservoir. Mr. Venincasa stated they will pay for all of the costs with the sewer connection including paving the road and there is no subsidy from the town. Mr. Grenier stated this location is not within a watershed area but they are required by DEP to manage the storm water runoff from the property. Mr. John Fitzgibbons has concerns with the potential traffic impact to the neighborhood. State Representative James O'Day stated this could potentially bring 300 residents to the property and Malden Street is a narrow and windy road and hears the concerns of the people of the neighborhood and feels it could bring lots of traffic. Mr. Venincasa stated traffic is always a concern with new projects and they will complete a traffic study of road and intersections. He stated they would make road improvements to be sure the roadways are safe. He stated there will be a half mile walking trail to be available to neighbors and will include parking area for visitors. Mr. Peter Woodbury direct abutter is concerned with scope of the project and . Mr. John DeCarlo asked if the traffic study yields larger roads would there be where would the property come from, Ms. Jennifer Warren Dymont does not know what the exact right of way is but assumes peoples property is in the right of way. Mr. Grenier discussed some common road right of ways standards. Ms. Erin Palumbo believes Mr. Venincasa is using affordable housing as a loop hole to build this monster project and feels he would have a better plan for affordable housing. Mr. Neil Peterson asked for clarification on the intended occupants of the project and also would like to know the scope of the traffic study and how they plan to accommodate ease of access for pedestrians. Mr. Bill Flaherty has concerns with the traffic potential from this project. Mr. Winthrop Handy asked about the infrastructure costs for the sewer system if all three projects are accepted. He asked if there will be escroll from the developer for costs that may be incurred to the town for sewer or water. He asked if they will be assisting funding for a ladder truck to be able to combat a fire for a four story building and also housing for the equipment. Mr. Handy stated the MLP will also need more infrastructure and to purchase

more energy. Mr. Frieden asked if they have done a tax assessment, Ms. Warren Dymant can ask the Assessor to explore a calculation of what the new growth could potentially be. Mr. Venincasa stated these projects typically bring values in neighborhood up not down. Ms. Leonardo asked for clarification of the process, Ms. Carolyn Murray, Town Counsel from KP Law responded and explained the process. Ms. Warren-Dymant explained the town needs 10% rental units to count for towns subsidized housing inventory to meet the required 45 units using the 2010 census with the 2020 census they will need 78 units. She explained once the town meeting the required amount of housing they will then be considered a safe harbor and there are three categories and the town does not meet any of them at this time. She stated the date the application is filed is going to dictate which census will be used. Ms. Elisa Wellington commented on the Millbury project and stated it is not similar to West Boylston it is in an old factory. She asked how the density of the neighborhood compares units per acre. She asked how many cars will be in the parking lot and believes it will be 83 cars. She is not happy to hear there will be a dog park. She is concerned with the widening of the road and it will take away from the small front yards that she already has. She feels more than one access will be needed for this location with 192 dwelling units. Mr. Mark Hillier discussed the law of affordable housing and does not believe this location fits the intent of the law. Mr. Venincasa stated they hire a third party to review compliance of the affordable housing laws. Ms. Kimberly Luce is a direct abutter and has concerns with the influx of people in the area. Mr. Berglund stated in the town's master plan for housing it addresses responsible growth and development. He explained the State's website also has great resources for development of affordable housing. Mr. Peterson asked for clarification on what the Selectboard will or will not review of the LIP and in Section 2 of the application it has explanation.

Mr. Rajeshkumar thanked everyone and explained tonight the Board will not be making any decisions.

ADJOURN MEETING

Motion Ms. Pedone moved to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.; Mr. Crowley second.

Roll Call Vote

Mr. Frieden, yes

Mr. Rucho yes,

Mr. Crowley yes,

Ms. Pedone, yes

Mr. Rajeshkumar, yes

All in favor

Approved

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

Faye D. Zukowski, Municipal Assistant

Barur R. Rajeshkumar, Chairman

Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chairman

Marc Frieden, Clerk

Patrick J. Crowley, Selectman

Kristina Pedone, Selectwoman