

STURBRIDGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MINUTES OF
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2015

Present: Elizabeth Banks
Margaret Cooney, Chair
Thomas Earls
Kevin Kelley, Clerk/Vice/Chair
Fidelis Onwubueke
Maryann Thorpe
Michael Young

Also Present: Jean M. Bubon, Town Planner
Diane M. Trapasso, Administrative Assistant
Judi Barrett, RKG Economic Planning & Real Estate, Consultant
Attorney John Goldrosen, Kopelman & Paige
Michael Andrade, Graves Engineering, Inc.
Robert Engler, SEB, LLC (40B Consultant)
Robert S. Morris, Morris Architecture
Branden St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Nick St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Matthew St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Andy St. Laurent, NBM Realty

The meeting was held at Town Hall – Veterans Memorial Hall – 308 Main Street.

Ms. Cooney opened the meeting at 6:00 PM for training.

The Board introduced themselves.

Ms. Barrett of RKG gave a presentation titled (Overview of Chapter 40B Fundamentals) to the Board prior to the Public Hearing started. Ms. Barrett is the Town's consultant for the 40B project.

7:00 PM PUBLIC HEARING – THE APPLICANT SEEKS A COMPREHENSIVE PERMIT UNDER M.G.L. CHAPTER 40B TO ALLOW THE CONSTRUCTION OF “FIVE LEAVES AT STURBRIDGE” A 103 UNIT APARTMENT COMPLEX TO BE LOCATED AT 152/158 MAIN STREET. THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS OWNED BY NBM REALTY, LLC.

Materials presented:

Stormwater Management Report	received 10-21-15
prepared by Graves Engineering, Inc. dated 10/19/2015	
Traffic Impacts prepared by Conley Associates	received 10/21/2015
dated 8/7/2015	

Project Data Summary	received 10/21/2015
Site Approval Letter from MassHousing	received 6/29/2015
Five Leaves at Sturbridge Site Plan, prepared by Graves Engineering, Inc. plan date 10/19/2015, revision #1 dated 10/19/2015, project #15108	received 10/21/2015
Comprehensive Permit Application – Five Leaves at Sturbridge – 152 – 158 Main Street	received 10/21/2015
Waiver Requests from Zoning Requirements – Five Leaves at Sturbridge –dated 10/21/2015	received 10/21/2015
Email from Michael Andrade - Graves Engineering	dated 11/3/2015
Email from David Wood Tennessee Gas Pipeline Co., LLC	dated 11/3/2015
Memo from Fire Department	dated 11/10/2015
Memo from Building Commissioner	dated 11/17/2015*
Memo from Planning Board	dated 11/17/2015*
Memo from DPW Director	dated 11/18/2015
Memo from Conservation Commission	dated 11/10/2015
Email from BOH Agent	dated 11/18/2015

*ZBA members received the memo on 11 18/2015

Mr. Kelley read the legal notice.

Ms. Cooney stated that the Board would place an end time for the hearings and she suggests somewhere between 9:00 and 9:30 PM. The Board and the applicant were all in agreement.

Ms. Cooney stated that this development project would provide some affordable rental housing within the meaning of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40B. The project will provide 26 units (25%) which meet the definition of low and moderate income under the State for 40B requirements.

Ms. Cooney stated that as of now Sturbridge is at 5.6% of affordable housing and when this project is finished it will bring Sturbridge to 9.6% close to the 10% mark.

Mr. Angler of SEB, LLC spoke. He stated that this development qualifies as assisted “low or moderate income housing” within the meaning of Mass General Laws Chapter 40B, section 20 and will provide 26 units (25%) which will meet the definition of low and moderate income under the statute. The applicant desires to develop the project pursuant to the guidelines of the New England Fund Program which is administered by MassHousing. A site approval letter from MassHousing was received.

The proposed site lies in a split zone between commercial and suburban residential, both of which allow for multifamily residential uses. However there are certain dimensional standards and land use requirements which we cannot meet; consequently zoning exceptions are requested.

Mr. Andrade of Graves Engineering stated that the property is subject to several site constraints. These limitations are physical, use, and easement encumbrances distributed across the majority of the property.

Mr. Andrade stated that the property contains two easements, a Gas Pipeline Easement and a driveway & utility easement. Situated along the easterly property line, the pipeline easement traverses the property in a northeasterly direction from Main Street through the properties located at Fairview Park Road. The second easement is the driveway and utility easement which is located along the southern property line. These easements, along with other restrictions dictate the location of structures such as buildings thus setting the stage for the configuration of the development on the property.

The proposed development will create a multi-family residential development consisting of 103 total units within three separate buildings. The buildings are situated in a north south orientation with parking areas located between them. Building #1 is located furthest south and nearest Main Street and contains 23 apartment units within a three story building with a club house for community functions and planned activities in the basement. The site will also house an office for the development. Building #2 contains 48 units within a 4 story building with a 36 space parking garage below. Building #3 contains 32 units within a 4 story with a 25 space parking garage below.

Site access will remain in approximately the same location as the existing curb cut but modified to create dedicated turning left and right lanes. Site driveway connections to the abutting Scottish Inn will be maintained in the same manner as existing. Surface and garage parking totals 157 spaces which equates to a ratio of 1.52 spaces per dwelling unit. Sidewalks connect all parking areas to building entrances, as well as, to a possible crosswalk on Main Street to the existing sidewalk on the opposite side of the street.

A large open space area is proposed on the western portion of the site with pedestrian access via a walkway and pre-engineered bridge spanning across the wetlands. Vehicular access to the open space area is proposed off Main Street via a gated driveway; this access would be used for construction and maintenance of the open space and for special event access that may require its use. In addition to the open space, a community seating and picnic area is proposed to the west of Building #3 which may also include a community garden.

Mr. Morris of Morris Architect stated that he was a former resident of Sturbridge and feels he knows what Sturbridge should look like. Mr. Morris feels that the architectural design of the three buildings reflect the quality of Sturbridge. The buildings will be wood frame and all the units will have porches.

The Board had the following concerns, comments and questions:

- Will there be any difference in the quality of the units or appliances provided between the affordable units and full price ones – Mr. Morris stated that there you will not be able to distinguish between the apartments
- Need to see better graphics of what the buildings will look like

- Is there adequate parking for all units plus visitors – may need to park elsewhere – Mr. Engler stated that recent studies show the parking ratio has changed to be less than we are providing 157 spaces and only 152 are required
- Very concerned about the safety of the children – pick-up and drop off for school bus – Board feels that having a bus stop on Route 131 may not be safe – Mr. Engler stated that the school department decides school bus stops – he stated that they will try to work with the school department and come up with a better stop
- How did you arrive at the number of bedrooms in the units – Mr. Engler stated that the number of bedrooms are market driven
- The Board would like to see an overlay of the site showing the building locations
- Run off – impact of the wetlands – Mr. Andrade stated they are not allowed to have increase the impact on the wetlands – alternative area underground service detention area
- Board would like to see the whole project existing and proposed overlaid on google map
- Snow removal – Mr. Andrade stated that there is snow storage and if we have a winter like last year the snow will be removed from the site

There were abutters present at the meeting and had the following had questions and concerns:

- Ms. Fulciniti, a tenant of the present building is concerned about the rent – Brian St. Laurent stated that the present tenants will be given a year at the same rent they are presently paying and same square footage or more – 3rd building will be developed first and ready for rental by the present tenants
- Mr. Goodwin of 19 Orchard Road stated that he lives in a Bob Morris house. He would like to see a final plan for the play area and how it will work – the site is all rock and has flooding problems
- Ms. Goodwin of 19 Orchard Road stated she is disappointed in the density of the project – too much building – absent of open space – no trails – no parks – where do the children play – unsafe for families – looks like an institution
- Owner of the Scottish Inn is very concerned about the driveway – he is very concerned about the residents using his driveway as a pass thru and about the traffic
- Mr. Chamberland of 55 Caron Road stated, as of now, there is only one pick up at the site and the stop is on Route 131
- Ms. Stoltze of 82 Fairview Park Road asked if there will there be a buffer between the properties and will the back of the property remain undeveloped – Mr. Andrade stated that the back of the property will remain undeveloped – it is densely wooded - wooded buffer will remain
- Ms. Lloyd of 78 Fairview Park Road stated that the project does not fit Sturbridge – maybe on a smaller scale – need a better version

Ms. Barrett stated it is important for the Board to see how the area will be designed. Ms. Barrett would like to see a Peer Review for a Traffic Study and for Conservation issues a Civil Engineer Peer Review with a Wetland Scientist who deals with 40B projects.

Attorney Goldrosen had the following concerns:

- Legal status on the driveway with the Scottish Inn
- Balloon test – 4 hours on a Saturday morning – set up time
- Think about a computer drawing to see what the project will look like
- Site visit - not open to the public – no discussion – only to observe and ask questions

Ms. Barrett stated that the next meeting should be dedicated to the traffic study.

Balloon Test – December 12, 2015 @ 10:00 AM – area to be staked out – two balloons (closest to the road & highest building)

Motion: Made by Mr. Kelley to continue the Public Hearing for Five Leaves at Sturbridge to January 6, 2016 @ 6:30 PM at Center Office Building.

2nd: Ms. Banks

Discussion: None

Vote: 7 – 0

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING

January 6, 2016 @ 6:30 PM at Center Office Building

January 20, 2016 @ 6:30 PM at Center Office Building

On a motion made by Mr. Kelley, seconded by Ms. Banks, and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM.