

STURBRIDGE ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
MINUTES OF
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2016

Present: Elizabeth Banks
Margaret Cooney, Chair
Thomas Earls
Kevin Kelley, Clerk/Vice/Chair (**arrived @ 6:40 PM**)
Fidelis Onwubueke
Maryann Thorpe
Michael Young

Also Present: Diane M. Trapasso, Administrative Assistant
Judi Barrett, RKG Economic Planning & Real Estate, Consultant
Michael Andrade, Graves Engineering, Inc.
Robert Engler, SEB, LLC (40B Consultant)
Robert Morris, Morris Architects
Brandon St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Nick St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Matthew St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Andy St. Laurent, NBM Realty
Clifford Boehmer, Davis Square Architects, Inc.

The meeting was held at Center Office Building – Meeting Room – 301 Main Street.

Ms. Cooney opened the meeting at 6:30 PM.

The Board introduced themselves.

CONTINUATION OF THE 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.

New Materials presented:

Management Plan for Five Leaves at Sturbridge – 103 Unit Apartment Complex – NBM Realty, LLC – received 3/8/2016

Five Leaves at Sturbridge 152 & 158 Main Street – prepared by Morris Architects – plan date 3/7/2016

Item/Color Specification Detail – received 3/30/2016

Five Leaves at Sturbridge 40B Development – Architectural Peer Review Report – Davis Square Architects – dated 4/4/2016

3D Rendering Five Leaves at Sturbridge – Bldg. #1 – received 4/8/2016

Mr. Boehmer of Davis Square Architects stated that there was an initial meeting on March 16, 2016 with the Town Planner, Mr. Andrade of Graves Engineering, Mr. St. Laurant, owner of NBM Realty and Mr. Morris of Morris Architect. The following was discussed at the meeting:

1. While the most visible building (Building #1) in the proposed development is both longer and higher than nearby structures, the façade is articulated to ameliorate those elements.
2. Along the length of the building, the footprint is jogged by about 8 feet, breaking the main mass into two pieces. Additionally, each apartment has an 8 foot balcony structure that extends beyond the primary envelope. Each stack of balconies is capped with a gable structure that breaks the vertical parapet clad in roofing materials to further break down the height of the façade by creating a faux mansard-style roof.
3. The height of the buildings will be visually mitigated by the introduction of wide horizontal banding of a contrasting color.
4. The lowest of the three buildings is located closest to the street. Given the natural grade of the site that slopes away from the road, the front building will largely screen the two taller buildings (Buildings #2 and #3) from view. The site drops approximately 20 feet from the street side of the first building to the rear elevation of the third structure furthest from the street).
5. Parking for the development is largely screened from the street by the front building, and by placing 61 of the spaces beneath the rear two buildings (unlike the neighboring commercial developments that place surface parking between the buildings and the street).
6. The site plan is driven by the location of a long swath of existing wetlands that run north-south across the full depth of the site.
7. The site, all site amenities, and all building common amenities must be fully accessible, including an accessible path to passive recreation area (and path to area across bridge), parking spaces, mail kiosk, picnic area, dumpsters and path to entry to Building #1, where common spaces all occur (and any other common spaces in Building 2 and 3). Those common spaces include Community Room (including Kitchen and bathrooms), exercise room and spa, storage areas, and laundry rooms (unless laundry facilities are provided within the accessible units). All units must be AAB type 1;5 units will be Type 2 “fully accessible:.
8. Owner confirmed that siding on the building will be vinyl.
9. Every unit will have a balcony or patio.
10. Parking area will include charging stations.

11. Heating and cooling will be provided by a heat pump system, individually metered. Condensing units will be on roof (largely concealed by a parapet wall).
12. Sturbridge did not adopt the “Stretch Code” which would impose a higher level of energy efficiency.
13. There is a gas company easement on the east edge of the site that limits improvements on top

Mr. Boehmer stated that the most positive aspect of the site is that all parking areas open up to the west, with access for the residents to the picnic area and large open recreation space on the other side of the wetlands. These parking areas would be greatly enhanced with sacrificing some parking spaces to provide planted peninsulas. These would create a much more pleasant walk to the open space, as well as potentially cutting down on solar gain on south-facing facades.

Building #1 is the only building that is fully viewed from the street, and is the “face” of the development. The south and east facades are the most visible to traffic. The natural slope of the site largely mitigates the impact of Building #2 and #3 (which are both four story structures, while Building #1 is a three-story building). The placement of Building #1 also screens most of the parking from view. These are both positive aspects of the site plan. However, improvements should be considered to the screening of the ground floor, south-facing units, from the busy traffic. While it is unlikely that any acoustical improvements could be made (beyond the triple glazed windows that are already proposed, and perhaps a more robust wall construction on that elevation), opaque fencing at the patio spaces, in addition to significant landscaping would be of benefit to those residences.

Mr. Boehmer also stated that in order to meet the Architectural Access Board requirements, care should be taken to ensure that there are accessible spaces within the covered parking areas, that is, accessible parking should not be limited to outdoor spaces (the parking plans at Building #2 and #3 have not been provided). If code requires that van-accessible spaces be provided, minimum ceiling height in the interior parking areas must be met. “Traffic calming” should be considered along the main feeder driveway, as well as raised crosswalks at the entry points to the parking fields. Alignment to the accessible parking aisle from side to side between Buildings #1 and #2 can reinforce a crossing point.

The Board had the following concerns, comments and questions:

- No difference in the affordable units – Mr. B. St. Laurant stated that there will be no difference in materials, appliances, etc. with the regular units
- Van pick-up – Mr. Andrade stated move to the side
- Three foot wall in front of Building #1 to absorb traffic noise – Mr. Boehmer stated that trees and landscaping would be better
- Mr. Andrade stated that that there is now a new proposed Gas Easement Planting Plan – the removable fence is no longer proposed as per the gas company – in lieu the applicant will plant tall grass plantings

- Who will maintain the tall grass – Mr. B. St. Laurant stated that management will maintain and keep in neat
- Will the patio door be a slider or French door – Mr. B. St. Laurant stated that the patio door will be a slider
- Height of the basement seems to be 10' – need more exact information – Mr. Morris stated not at this time
- Will the tenants have a key code for entrance – Mr. B. St. Laurant stated that the entrances will be key coded and there will be security cameras
- What is the height of the garage – Mr. Morris stated 11 1/2'

Ms. Barrett stated that the Board and Mr. Boehmer need a full set of plans with elevations to review. When will this happen?

Mr. B. St. Laurant stated that the full set should be ready next week.

Mr. Engler stated that Mr. Boehmer did a great job with his architectural review and should be able to start drafting conditions.

Ms. Barrett stated that she would like permission from the Board to meet separately with the applicant, Mr. Engler, Graves Engineering, Mr. Boehmer and herself to start drafting conditions of approval.

The Board agreed to have Ms. Barrett meet with the appropriate parties and start working on the draft conditions.

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

- Mr. Santosuosso of 139 Fairview park Road stated that he did not receive a legal notice – Ms. Barrett stated it will need to be looked at
- Mr. Patel of the Scottish Inn is still concerned about residents driving through his property
- Architectural Peer Review did an excellent job
- Concern about wetlands

Motion: Made by Mr. Kelley to continue the Public Hearing for Five Leaves at Sturbridge to May 4, 2016 @ 6:30 PM at Center Office Building.

2nd: Ms. Thorpe

Discussion: None

Vote: 7 – 0

CORRESPONDENCE

None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

NEXT MEETING

May 4, 2016, - 40B Comprehensive Permit – Five Leaves at Sturbridge – Center Office Building

On a motion made by Ms. Banks, seconded by Mr. Kelley, and voted unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.