

**TOWN OF BARRINGTON
PLANNING BOARD
TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
HOUSING BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Minutes of a Joint Meeting Held January 15, 2013
Library Auditorium Gallery Room, Barrington Public Library

Open Meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. by Larry Trim, Vice Chair, acting as Chair for Planning Board; Bob Stillings, Chair, Technical Review Committee; and Steve Martin, Chair, Housing Board of Trustees.

Mr. Trim agreed to run the meeting for the three boards. A roll call was held.

Planning Board

Present: Larry Trim – Acting Chair, Edgar Adams (arrived at 7:13), Paul Dulchinos, Seth Milman, Christine O’Grady, Jean Robertson

Technical Review Committee

Present: Bob Stillings – Chair, Edgar Adams (arrived at 7:13), Rick Greenwood, Greg Spiess, Jon Stabach, Noah Szosz and Larry Trim

Housing Board of Trustees

Present: Steve Martin – Chair, Steve Boyajian, Ben Copple (Alternate), Carla DeStefano, Molly Lee (Alternate), Richard Staples, Linda Testa, Mike Winitzky (Alternate)

Also Attending: Assistant Town Solicitors Andy Teitz and Nancy Letendre; Town Planner Philip Hervey

Housing Board: Approve Minutes - December 18, 2012 Meeting

The Housing Board voted unanimously to accept the minutes (motion by Mr. Staples, seconded by Mr. Boyajian).

Pre-Application Concept Review: Palmer Pointe Neighborhood – Plat 28, Lots 72, 73, 246, 248, 249 and 263 (Sowams Nursery property, east side of Sowams Road)

Frank Spinella, FJS Associates, representing East Bay CDC, said the developer is proposing that all of the 48 new units would be affordable to households earning up to 60 percent of the area median income. He said 20 percent of the residents of Barrington would qualify.

Don Powers, architect, Union Studios, gave a PowerPoint presentation, which included the following information:

- The plan would include the rehabilitation of two existing houses on Sowams Road to be sold as market-rate units.
- The site layout would preserve an existing line of sugar maples located to the left of the main roadway heading directly into the site from Sowams Road.
- Public access to the Palmer River would be maintained.
- All construction would take place outside the 200-foot CRMC buffer, plus a 25-foot construction buffer.
- Along the northerly property line, a 25-foot-wide buffer would be maintained, and plantings and an opaque board fence would be installed at the property line.
- Density examples provided of other areas/projects in Barrington:
 - Sweetbriar, 5.8 units/acre
 - Walker Farm Lane, 6.6 units/acre
 - Haines Park Village, 11 units/acre
 - Orchard Avenue, 5 units/acre
 - Palmer Pointe (just including the area outside the 225-foot buffer), 8.4 units/acre
- The architectural character is not fully defined, but it would likely be similar to Sweetbriar.
- Building materials would include architecture-grade asphalt shingles, paintable PVC trim, Anderson 200 series or similar quality windows, and Hardie board siding.
- The project will comply with the State's new storm water regulations, with the measures integrated into the project as landscape features.
- The buildings will feature porches.
- Floor plans are not yet available.
- Common green spaces will be provided within the development.

Shawn Martin, engineer, Fuss & O'Neill, described the engineering design considerations, including provision of water supply and sanitary sewers and management of storm water. The Department of Public Works has indicated a preference to tie into the existing sewer line located to the east of the buildings, but, as it is in the CRMC buffer, the connection may not be allowed. Otherwise, the sewer connection would need to take place at Sowams Road. He said the project will require a re-assessment of wetlands on the site, including a new survey with wetlands flagging. CRMC likely will require restoration of cleared areas within the buffer zone, Mr. Martin said.

Public water will be extended into the site from an existing stub at Sowams Road, he said. Storm water will be handled through "soft" controls, rather than catch basins and manholes. There will be multiple areas that will appear as pockets of wetlands, to filter then discharge the storm water.

A traffic impact study will be completed, to include an evaluation of the intersection of the new street with Sowams Road; Sowams Road Kent at Street will also be evaluated.

Other information from the applicant's team included:

- An application for Low Income Tax Credits will be submitted in October.
- Construction is anticipated to start at the end of 2014.
- Full occupancy would be by spring of 2016, assuming a 14-month construction timeframe.

- The “fourplex” buildings in the middle would be single-story, each with one bedroom.
- The proposed community building would be for washers and dryers, and a manager’s office.
- The plan was not changed following the neighborhood meeting held previously. Mr. Spinella said comments at that meeting were general in nature, rather than plan-specific.
- The road would be public.
- The project can be income-restricted, not age-restricted.

Questions from the boards and responses included the following.

- Would the applicant consider expanding the income range, up to market-rate units?
 - Mr. Spinella: The available source of financing requires the units to be affordable only to those at 60% AMI or below. Financing cannot be mixed, though it’s possible the project could be bifurcated to get a mixed-income project.
- Has the applicant considered the property across Sowams Road?
 - Mr. Spinella: The property owner offered to sell only the property on the water side.
- Where is the flood zone on the property?
 - Mr. Martin: The portion of the property near the Palmer River is in the A zone. All construction, including the storm water controls, would be outside the flood zone.
- Will there be play structures provided within the development?
 - Mr. Powers: No formal play structures are proposed. There are areas for passive play, including the open space toward the water behind the easternmost buildings, and several small “pocket places” within the development where smaller kids can play.
- Have alternative pavement types been considered?
 - Mr. Martin: The roadways would be conventional pavement; however, there might be opportunities in other areas for permeable pavement.
- What is the current value of tax credits?
 - Mr. Spinella: about 95 cents to the dollar currently, compared to just 65 cents to the dollar about four years ago. These are 10-year tax credits.
- Will handicap-accessible units be included?
 - Mr. Powers: A minimum of 5 percent will be handicap-accessible. The eight single-story units in the middle will be on slab, allowing for easy wheelchair access.
- Why all rental?
 - Mr. Spinella: The financing requires it. The units would be geared toward families, making turnover less frequent. He said the 47-unit Sweetbriar development, also designed for families, had only seven apartments turn over out last year.
- Can the project be denied based on the potential tax burden?
 - Mr. Teitz: Tax burden cannot be considered in the decision.
- Will the units have basements?
 - Mr. Spinella: Not known at this time.
- Could some of the units be re-oriented to better embrace the large open space in the easterly section of the site?
 - Mr. Powers: The design would be improved by better relating to the open space.

- How will the building design use materials to differentiate the architecture?
 - Mr. Powers: In a manner similar to Sweetbriar, which had only two building plan types but varied colors, eave details, etc.
- Would backyards be provided?
 - Mr. Powers: Each unit would have a small patio, 8' by 8' or 10' by 10', and with landscaped screening.
- Describe the buffers on the edges.
 - Mr. Powers: There is only one house near the site to the south. An opaque fence in that area would likely be provided. Along the northerly property line, an opaque fence and landscaping would be installed.
- How is parking provided?
 - Mr. Powers: There would be two off-street spaces per unit provided throughout, the majority in five lots behind the buildings. Eight on-street parking spaces would be provided for visitors.
- How will snow removal be handled?
 - Mr. Spinella: A management company will be responsible for plowing the parking areas.
- Are there Dumpsters proposed?
 - Mr. Spinella: Residents would put their trash out at the curb for pickup, as it would be a public street.
 - Mr. Powers: Utility sheds to the rear of buildings would provide areas for trash cans and recycling bins.

Questions from the public and responses included the following.

- Is there a standard lease that is used?
 - Mr. Spinella: A standard lease is provided by RI Housing. It includes restrictions on the maximum number of people that can occupy a unit.
- How would access to public transit on County Road be provided? Sowams Road is dangerous.
 - Mr. Powers: The applicant cannot solve this problem other than within the limits of the development.
 - Ms. Letendre: Pedestrian safety would be addressed in a traffic impact study.
- Has there been a study on the impact to property values?
 - Mr. Teitz: An analysis of this issue could be required by the Planning Board, which could be completed by the applicant or by a Town expert, with the cost of an independent study covered by applicant.
- Has water pressure been evaluated?
 - Mr. Martin: Not yet.
- What is the estimated number of students?
 - Mr. Spinella: No estimate is available yet. Sweetbriar had 47 students. He added enrollment in the school system is declining.
- Will the Planning Board have independent experts reviewing the project on behalf of the Town, rather than rely on information provided by the applicant?

- Mr. Teitz: The Planning Board would hire experts to conduct peer review of the plans, and could also require independent studies.
- How was the proposed number of units determined? An evaluation of site suitability should provide the basis for determining this number.
 - Mr. Spiess: The Town completed analysis of the site several years ago, which included an evaluation of development potential.
- Is the flood zone A10 or A11?
 - Mr. Martin: The flood zone will be verified.
- When will the applicant ask the Town Council for tax abatement for the project?
 - Mr. Spinella: It will be requested during the review of the application by the Planning Board.
 - Ms. Letendre: A separate petition for tax relief for affordable rental housing will be addressed to the Town Council between the Master Plan and Preliminary stages of approval
- How will public input be considered?
 - Mr. Teitz: The review of the proposal will be a multi-step process allowing for public input during the public informational meetings on the master plan, and public hearings on the preliminary plan. There also will be public meetings held by the TRC and Housing Board where the proposal is discussed.
- How many Barrington residents live in Sweetbriar? There is a waiting list for Sweetbriar – how many are from Barrington?
 - Mr. Spinella: This will be researched.
- How is the income from the development (rent) used?
 - Mr. Spinella: The rents cover operating expenses. The \$14 million to \$15 million from tax credits for the development is provided up-front.
- How will the community benefit from the project?
 - Mr. Trim: This will be addressed during the review process, when specifics of the project are discussed.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.