

To: Jay Sheers, Chair, and the City of Beacon Planning Board

Date: July 6, 2017

Re: **Edgewater Site Plan and Subdivision**

In June I reviewed the May 30, 2017 response letters from Michael A. Bodendorf and Aryeh Siegel, LWRP Consistency Statement, a 15-sheet Site Plan package, dated May 30, 2017, a May 9, 2017 Parking Exhibit, and a traffic analysis response letter from Maser Consulting. For this month's meeting additional material included a June 27, 2017 cover from Jennifer Van Tuyl, a June 26, 2017 traffic review letter from Creighton Manning, and a June 26, 2017 School Impact Study from Cleary Consulting.

### **Proposal**

The applicant is proposing to demolish two existing buildings, construct seven apartment buildings containing 307 units on 12.009 acres in the RD-1.7 zoning district.

### **Comments and Recommendations**

Many of these comments are the same as last month, since the public hearing was postponed at the applicant's request and no new site plan materials were submitted.

1. Several variances are being requested for this project, including:
  - Maximum stories for Buildings 3, 4, and 6;
  - More than 36 units per building (Buildings 1, 2, 3, and 6 have between 48 and 59 units);
  - Less than 30 feet between buildings (building separations range from 12 to 24 feet).The Board should issue recommendations to the ZBA.
2. The applicant is requesting a decision on the land-banked parking options shown on Sheet 1 and the Parking Exhibit. Both options provide about 400 spaces, more than required by code.
  - Option A shows 67 land-banked spaces on steeply sloping ground along the Bank Street frontage, requiring a two-tiered retaining wall up to 20 feet high and 600 feet long.
  - Option B uses the northern end of the central green area for the first 33 extra spaces and, if even more spaces may be required, provides a shorter 35-space segment along Bank Street.

I recommend Option B because almost half of the banked parking is in a more easily accessible area, it allows additional parking to be phased in two locations, and would significantly reduce the length of any retaining wall along Bank Street, if proved necessary. Replacement eco-lawn parkland has been provided on the top of the hill south of Buildings 3 and 4. Overall, The Board should strive to limit parking to encourage a tenant mix with fewer cars, creating less neighborhood traffic.

3. The Planning Board should issue an LWRP Consistency Determination for the project. The applicant's consistency statement addresses all the appropriate LWRP policies and provides a visual simulation from the most significant public viewpoint near the Metro-North platform.
4. The City Council has adopted new parking standards with 18-foot spaces and 24-foot aisles. All the parking areas should be narrowed to reduce unnecessary asphalt and drainage requirements, add landscaping, and allow separation from sidewalks where cars may overhang curbs.

5. Although not yet shown of the plans, the applicant has agreed to extend the sidewalk east from the Tompkins Avenue entry to a crosswalk at Bank Street, as suggested by the Creighton Manning traffic consultant.
6. The under-building ADA parking spaces must be located at the shortest accessible route of travel to the elevator entrances, not in the center of the podium away from the elevators. Also, the garage entry, as shown, is too narrow for two-way traffic.
7. A note on the Landscape Plan should confirm that the trees adjacent to the parking lots will be at least 3-inch caliper at four feet above the ground level.
8. The building elevations should continue to be reviewed by the Architectural Review Subcommittee.
9. The *School Impact Study* concludes that the Beacon School District has adequate capacity for the projected 47 school-age children and that the proposed project will have a net positive financial impact on the school district. However, the demographic multipliers are based on a 2006 Rutgers study that has several rent levels. The applicant's consultant should justify the rent level used. The study should also address the potential cumulative impacts of approved and proposed projects.

The Rutgers multipliers do not have a separate calculation for studio apartments, so the one-bedroom multiplier is used for the 96 studio units. This may overestimate residents and school-age children. The study mentions more recent research that shows that the Rutgers multipliers are too high. The consultant should provide citations for these studies, especially for comparable projects near transit stations. According to the U. S. Census Fact Finder website, Beacon's 2010 population count was revised down to 14,599 on October 22, 2012.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me.

John Clarke, Beacon Planning Consultant

c: Tim Dexter, Building Inspector  
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