

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

Date: October 6, 2017

Re: **Edgewater Site Plan and Subdivision**

I reviewed the following new materials:

- Response letters from Michael A. Bodendorf and Aryeh Siegel, dated September 26, 2017;
- Response comments from Cleary Consulting, dated September 26, 2017;
- Phase IA Archeological Investigation from Hartgen Archeological Associates, dated Sept. 2017;
- Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat Suitability Assessment Report from Ecological Solutions, dated September 15, 2017;
- Water and Sewer Engineer's Report from Hudson Land Design, revised September 26, 2017;
- Revised Full EAF with supplemental narrative, dated September 25, 2017; and
- 15-sheet site plan set, with the latest revision date of September 26, 2017.

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

1. The revised parking plan with 33 land-banked spaces meets the minimum standards, but as noted in my previous comments, the proposed spaces near Bank Street need a 27.5-foot setback due to the requirements in 223-26 C(1) and the side yard footnote in the RD-1.7 bulk table. The first two spaces in the northeast corner should be relocated.
2. The Water and Sewer Engineer's Report has a unit mix and bedroom count on page 2 that does match the numbers in the revised EAF, Site Plan sheets, and School Impact Study.
3. Overall documentation has been submitted for the Board's SEQRA determination, including the traffic study, Phase IA archeological investigation, habitat assessment, and school impact analysis.
4. Several variances are being requested for this project, including:
 - Maximum stories from 4½ to 5 stories for Buildings 3, 4, and 6 (within the 55-foot height limit);
 - 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 25 feet).

The Board should issue recommendations to the ZBA. The applicant makes the case that the three variances are necessary to consolidate the built area on the site and maximize open space. It is true that seven larger buildings set closer together will allow more greenspace per unit. As an illustrative example, eight 36-unit buildings placed 30 feet apart could fit within the proposed layout, but with 288 total apartments and less contiguous central park space.

5. The Planning Board will need to issue an LWRP Consistency Determination for the project. The applicant's consistency statement addresses all the appropriate LWRP policies.

6. A crosswalk should be shown across Bank Street at Tompkins Avenue.
7. The building dimensions and distance between buildings on the Site Plan sheets and Floor Plan sheets do not exactly match.
8. The June 26, 2017 *School Impact Study* and supplemental comments conclude 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. The proposed student estimate, if anything, seems conservative since:
 - Average household sizes have continued to decline since the 2006 multipliers were published;
 - Several large-scale studies have shown that apartments near train stations generally have lower resident and school children counts;
 - 96 of the 307 proposed units are smaller studio apartments, which should have a lower student ratio than the one-bedroom ratio used for studios in the *School Impact Study*; and
 - The survey of Beacon multi-family housing development, particularly the most recent three projects on the list, provides local supporting background information for a lower average number of school-age children.

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
Jennifer L. Gray, Esq., City Attorney
Arthur R. Tully, P.E., City Engineer
John Russo, P.E., City Engineer
Aryeh Siegel, Project Architect