

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

Date: November 9, 2017 Draft

Re: **Edgewater Site Plan and Subdivision**

I reviewed the following new materials:

- Response letters from Michael A. Bodendorf and Aryeh Siegel, dated October 31, 2017;
- Response comments from Cleary Consulting, dated October 25, 2017;
- Central Hudson letter re: right-of-way, dated May 24, 2017;
- 15-sheet site plan set, with the latest revision date of October 31, 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. 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. The Planning Board will also need to issue an LWRP Consistency Determination for the project. The applicant's consistency statement addresses all the appropriate LWRP policies.
2. As a summary of the school impact positions, the applicant's June 26, 2017 *School Impact Study* and supplemental comments conclude that the Beacon City School District (BCSD) has adequate capacity for the projected 47 school-age children and that the proposed project will have a net positive financial impact on the district. Three central assumptions have been disputed by the BCSD: the estimate of public school-age children, the assessed value of the completed project, and the cost per student to be used in the fiscal calculation. The schools have available capacity, since overall enrollment has dropped 20%, or 735 students, between 2004-5 and 2015-16.

Both parties agree that the 2006 Rutgers Residential Demographic Multipliers for New York are the industry-accepted standard for estimating school children, but they disagree on what level ratios to apply in this case. The applicant's estimate of 47 appears, if anything, high since the total school-age children table was used from the Rutgers Study, rather than the more targeted public school-age children (PSAC) ratios. Also, 96 of the 307 proposed units are smaller studio apartments, which should have a lower student count than the one-bedroom ratio used in the *School Impact Study*. My best estimate is below, using the higher 67th-100<sup>th</sup> percentile PSAC ratio for the market rate units and the medium 34<sup>th</sup>-66<sup>th</sup> percentile PSAC ratio for the required workforce units:

Units	#	Market	Ratio	PSAC	Workforce	Ratio	PSAC	Total PSAC
Studio	96	86	.07	6.02	10	.27	2.7	8.72
1 BR	115	104	.07	7.28	11	.27	2.97	10.25
2 BR	86	77	.16	12.32	9	.45	4.05	16.37
3 BR	10	9	.63	5.67	1	1.3	1.3	6.97
Totals	307	276			31			42.31

The City of Beacon Assessor has estimated that the assessed value of the completed project will be between \$34 and 40 million. At the midpoint of this estimate, the development will generate \$810,300 of annual tax revenue for the BCSD.

For the cost of the additional PSAC, the applicant has proposed using the BCSD 2015-16 Instructional Budget cost of \$17,102 per student, which includes teaching salaries/benefits, special needs, library, attendance, guidance, health and social services, interscholastic and other activities, transportation, and similar more student-sensitive functions. The BCSD has maintained that the total budget cost of \$23,116 per student should be used, which also accounts for the Board of Education, central administration, finance, legal, personnel, records management, supervisors' salaries/benefits, and capital budget items, including central services and debt services. The net fiscal impacts depend on which one of these figures seems most reasonable. As another factor of comparison, the actual local tax levy, after state aid and other revenue, is \$12,653 per student.

	Cost/Student	# Students	Add'l. Costs	Revenue	Net Impacts
Instructional Budget	\$17,102	42	\$718,284	\$810,300	+ \$92,016
Total Budget	\$23,116	42	\$970,872	\$810,300	-\$160,572

Marginally increasing enrollment by about 42 students in a district that is down 735 students since 2004-5 and down 128 students from the previous year should not significantly affect the capital and administrative budget sections. I think that the Instructional Budget calculation is justifiable.

3. 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 into seven buildings and to maximize open space on the site. The attached illustrative example shows that eight 36-unit buildings placed 30 feet apart could fit within the proposed site layout for a total of 288 apartments with about the same total park/plaza area and at least 18 fewer banked parking spaces. It should be noted that under Article IVB, Affordable Workforce Housing, 29 of these units would be available at below-market rates and the applicant may request up to 10 additional market rate units.

4. The distance between buildings on the Site Plan and Floor Plan sheets still do not exactly match.

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

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