

Approved: 5/19/2021

TOWN OF WINCHENDON



AS Manugian
(Pl. Agent)

Zoning Board

(978)-297-5419

Regular Meeting - April 28, 2021

Via Zoom - Meeting ID: 929 8254 1017 Passcode: 0074714

ZBA Members Present: Bryan Vaine, Cynthia Carvill, Richard 'Erik' Stancombe, Rob Bushay, Ray Benoit

Others Present: Alison Manugian, Dorrie Brooks & Jill DeCoursey of Jones Whitsett, Larry Berger & Rachelly Bartolotta of Anser Advisory, Rachel Loeffler & Greg P. Henson of Berkshire Design, Charley Murphy, Executive Director of MVOC, Keith Glenny of LaFortune, Oldach & Glenny, Janet Corbosiero

Chair C. Carvill called the meeting to order at 7:04pm

Announcements and Minutes

A Manugian made a general request for attendees to put their name in the chat for minutes

C. Carville announced that this hearing will be continued and the intent for tonight is to end around 9pm

R. Bushay made a motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2021 as presented. R. Stancombe seconded the motion and all present approved via roll call vote.

C. Carville introduced herself and the board members and inquired if any board members had conflicts; no one did. She also offered an overview of the Comprehensive Permit (40B) process and intent for the meeting tonight. She recommended that the Board schedule a site visit with the applicant prior to closing tonight and reiterated the difference between a site visit and a posted meeting.

R. Benoit read the public hearing notice and **R. Bushay motioned to open the public hearing. R. Benoit seconded the motion and the hearing was opened via unanimous roll call vote at 7:15pm.**

D. Brooks gave an overview of the existing 3.8ac parcel and building proposals.

The site has two vacant former school buildings built in the 1920's and 1930's (before zoning regulations). The buildings are in disrepair and the project will rehabilitate and connect the structures without significant site alterations. The project massing will retain the height of the existing buildings and the connective piece will step back to defer to the existing structures. The Poland School will have 7 units, the Streeter School 17 units and the new connector 20 units. All units will be affordable one bedrooms rented to Veterans and each unit is roughly equivalent to a single classroom. D. Brooks highlighted the elevations and pointed out the location of key interior spaces from the exterior perspective. She noted that the vegetation show is representative and not what will be planned. A plan view was shown of the first floor with common and private areas.

The new construction between the existing buildings will be sloped to accommodate the elevation changes. The intent is to use different materials for the new section to highlight the existing historic structures. The use of historic tax credits requires that the historic structures remain dominant. The existing doors and windows will be replaced, the existing doors will largely be kept for egress but are not anticipated for daily use.

R. Loeffler of Berkshire Design spoke to the exterior and site plans.

The site development and structures pre-date the zoning regulations in Winchendon, but they do comply with most of the current regulations. There are 22 parking spaces planned off of Oak Street, near the main entry area. A one way drop off loop, accessible by busses, is planned for access. There are 33 off-site spaces in the area that can be used. The intent is for the exterior hardscaping to be ADA compliant and the ADA entrance will

C. Carville reminded all that a site walk needs to be held

L. Berger indicated that evenings will be tough given the lack of lighting in the buildings currently

Discussion ensued about the time and day of a site visit and 12:30pm on Saturday, May 8th was finalized; as a reminder no Board discussion or deliberation is permitted on a site visit

A Manugian summarized that most of the questions at this point are around parking and that she will reach out to the DPW for confirmation of capacity in the town utilities to service this property. Hard copy plans and application are available for review in the Land Use office with coordination.

R. Bushay motioned to continue the public hearing to 7pm on May 19th. R. Stancombe seconded the motion and all voted aye via roll call.

R. Bushay indicated that the plans are in good shape at this point and the work to date makes the project review easier for everyone. He then motioned to adjourn. R. Benoit seconded the motion and all voted aye via roll call.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:35pm

- D. Brooks noted that the project will excavate down and add external drainage around the foundation. Conditioning the interior air, increasing glazing and adding full insulation will all help as well.
- C. Carville likes the idea of being able to add project parking if needed in the future
- D. Brooks agreed reiterating that they do think this will be enough parking and they don't want to put in more impervious than is needed – other pervious options could be considered as well.
- R. Loeffler added that it's more common on their projects to see vacant parking spaces than additional need
- R. Stancombe asked about the locations and markings/signage for on-street parking spaces
- C. Carville added that some of the streets are narrow in the area
- R. Loeffler pointed out that the sidewalks will be pulled in off the curb line to make areas safer and that the roadways won't be narrower after the project
- C. Carville stated that it didn't appear there could be much parking on Oak Street given the curb cuts and vegetation
- R. Loeffler offered to provide a diagram with additional detail around parking for the next meeting
- R. Bushey brought up exterior lighting and the need to not impact neighbors
- R. Loeffler outlined that there are currently downward focused lights around the site and highlighted the photometric plan – Park St has outward facing lights and Murdock will have more lights. Pulling the sidewalks away from the roads will allow for more space for light poles. The photometric plan shows that there is little light spillage from the site, which shrubs will also help block.
- C. Carville asked if members of the public had questions or concerns
- J. Corbosiero stated she has a number of questions and that she would like to see meetings held in person. Twenty two on-site parking spaces seems low – Academy Street, where she lives, is narrow – her primary concern is summer parking when there are visitors and the 22 spaces are already full
- L. Berger stated that Park and Murdock Streets have parking
- C. Carville stated it seems unlikely that Academy will be a popular parking area
- J. Corbosiero asked about the plan for curbing
- L. Berger stated that the curbing is intended to be concrete placed to not reduce existing widths
- J. Corbosiero would prefer curbing so that vehicles can pull fully off the road and park on the grass
- J. Corbosiero asked about hosting functions on a regular basis
- C. Murphy stated that they won't be having functions, there are small seating areas for residents and an interior day room for socializing
- J. Corbosiero raised concerns about the columbarium
- C. Murphy reiterated that the columbarium is not a must-have for the applicant
- J. Corbosiero asked how the drainage in the area will be impacted as her basement already floods
- G. Henson responded that there will be no increased runoff from the site
- C. Carville stated that drainage will be taken into account and that a peer review would include that information
- J. Corbosiero indicated she had no other concerns
- R. Loeffler returned to curbing stating that the 4' between the road and sidewalk allow for future Town flexibility and that raised curbing at the curb cuts is intended to control traffic and demark the area
- A Manugian reminded abutters and the public that they can submit comments and questions to her at Town hall and they will be shared with the applicant and ZBA members

be off of Murdock Ave. The garden area will include areas for bocce and seating areas. There will be a courtyard off of the day room for socializing. There are 5 flag poles, each planned with uplighting, to honor each branch of the armed services. The intent is to focus on green spaces and make a walkable pleasant site. A columbarium wall with memorial feature is planned.

The existing utility runs to the right of the site will be respected and the detention areas will retain water for less than the 72 hour maximum in the regulations. Electrical and gas will be brought in from the North side of the site and there will be public water and sewer to serve the development. A zoning waiver is requested as part of the submission; the current building height is 35' but the ground will be lowered approximately 2' in the development. This will allow for larger ground level windows (with increased light and ventilation) that also provide emergency egress.

C. Carville opened up for Board member comments and questions.

R. Benoit asked for clarification around the units. D. Brooks stated that each will be a single bedroom unit of approximately 550sf marketed to low income veterans. This will not be a therapeutic setting but services and outreach will be accessible on-site and via Gardner.

R. Stancombe asked about the capacity of the existing utilities to service the project. D. Brooks explained that there is sufficient capacity. A Manugian will seek a statement of such from the DPW Director. Rooftop units and a transformer will be provided on-site. Propane will be on site in smaller quantities.

C. Carville asked about laundry facilities and D. Brooks advised that there will be a common laundry area for every 4-5 units.

R. Bushay asked about unit counts; D. Brooks responded that the state looks for developments of 40-50 units as their ideal and that need is based on town specifics and regional concerns.

R. Bushay asked about veterans' services and hospital access. C. Murphy outlined that the facilities in Northampton are expected to be the primary service, but that they are almost equidistant to the location in Bedford, MA.

C. Carville expressed concerns about the parking planned. There will be 44 units and only 22 on-site spaces. The off site spaces don't allow for overnight parking in the winter or during storm events. L. Berger outlined that this calculation is based on their past experience and that many residents don't have vehicles. If additional parking is needed more spaces can be added on the unused portion of the site accessible off of Oak Street.

C. Carville asked if there will be group transportation provided; C. Murphy outlined that they intend to run service but have not worked out the details. The local MART route connects this location to Gardner and other transportation.

R. Benoit asked, as a veteran himself, if these are folks at risk. C. Murphy replied that some of them may be – the residents will be lower income and some units will be ADA compliant. There may be some with increased mental health concerns but it will be a mix with the primary factor being income.

R. Bushay and C. Carville asked about neighborhood impacts – The school up the street means there are children walking in the area and parents may have concerns. Is there a screening tool or code of conduct for residents?

C. Murphy responded that the veterans will add to the community and are a resource for teachers and schools, they have seen no issues at their other locations – they anticipate collaboration with the senior center for shared programming.

C. Carville mentioned the Fire Chief's note that sprinklers will be required although they are not yet shown and that he would like more information on the eternal flame in the columbarium wall. D. Brooks confirmed the sprinkler need.

C. Carville highlighted the nearby National Veterans' Cemetery and that more information will be needed on the intended cremains; which raise a vandalism concern and questions about the future impact on the property

C. Murphy indicated that they have other locations with a columbarium but that this isn't a vital piece of the project

C. Carville also shared the Health Agent's concern about moisture and mold possibilities in the ground floor units